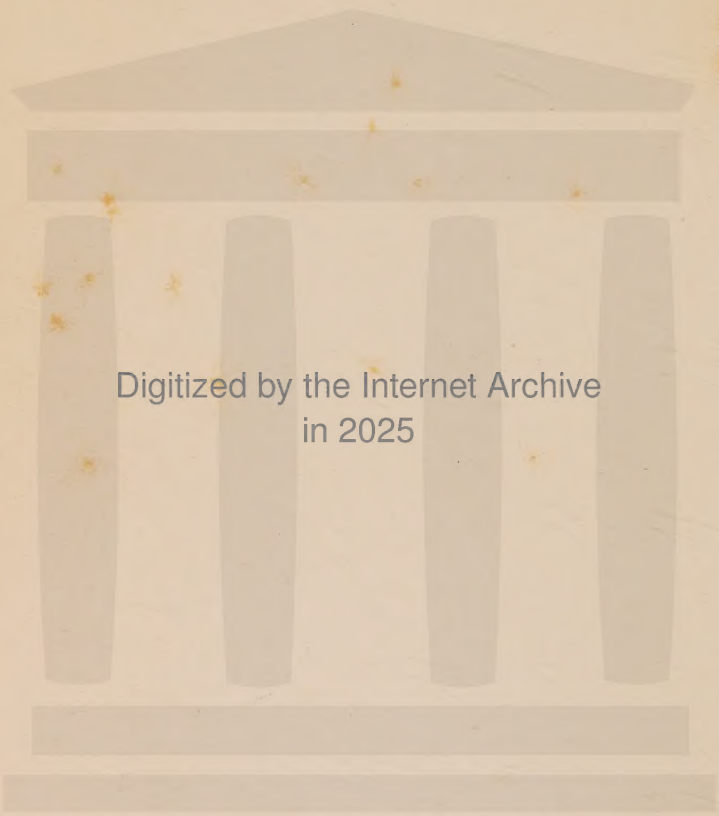
Carmina Mariana

ORBY SHIPLEY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CARMINA MARIANA

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Annus Sanctus

HYMNS OF THE CHURCH FOR THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

Translated from the Sacred Offices by Various Authors, with other Hymns, and an Appendix of Earlier Versions.

Preparing for publication.

Poema Domina

A COMPANION VOLUME TO CARMINA MARIANA

In Honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Carmina Mariana

AN ENGLISH ANTHOLOGY IN VERSE

IN HONOUR OF OR IN RELATION TO

The Blessed Virgin Mary

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY

ORBY SHIPLEY, M.A.

Editor of 'Annus Sanctus : Hymns of the Church for the Ecclesiastical Year'

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SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX: XII. CENT.

From the IV. V. and VI. Lessons in the Second Nocturn of Mattins, for the Feast of the Holy Name of Mary, in the Roman Breviary.

Translated (1879) *by John, Marquess of Bute.*

'And the Virgin's name was Mary.' Let us speak a few words upon this name, which signifieth 'Star of the Sea,' and suiteth very well the Maiden-Mother, who may meetly be likened unto a star. A star giveth forth her rays without any harm to herself; and the Virgin brought forth her Son without any hurt to her virginity. . . . O thou, whosoever thou art, that knowest thyself to be here not so much walking upon firm ground as battered to and fro by the gales and storms of this life's ocean, if thou wouldest not be overwhelmed by the tempest, keep thine eyes fixed upon this Star's clear shining. . . . In danger, in difficulty, or in doubt, think on Mary, call on Mary. . . . If thou follow her, thou wilt never go astray. If thou pray to her, thou wilt never have need to despair. If thou keep her in mind, thou wilt never wander. If she hold thee, thou wilt never fall. If she lead thee, thou wilt never be weary. If she help thee, thou wilt reach home safe at the last: and so, thou wilt prove in thyself how meetly it is said, 'And the Virgin's name was Mary.'

To the Revered Memory of

CARDINAL MANNING

Prelate, Philanthropist, Patriot

To whom, amongst other Gifts and Graces, was granted to be

in his friendships kind, faithful, and true

Who encouraged the idea of

Our Blessed Lady's Anthology

And counselled its development

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

Note

THE Second is a reproduction of the First Edition, with these exceptions :

1. A few misprints, which escaped notice, have been corrected.
2. The Contents have been printed anew, with a variation of type, and a footnote, which will make them more easy to be consulted.
3. At the suggestion of friends, an Index of Authors, unfortunately omitted before, has been supplied.
4. Some Extracts from Reviews have been added. These criticisms, taken from different points of view, may prove of interest. They have been chosen, with impartiality, from reviews which evidenced independent judgment on the object of the book, or formed estimates of individual contributions. Notices, which were good enough to express general commendation in general terms only, have not been quoted. Neither has it been possible to quote from all Reviews, English and foreign.

For the almost unanimous, and often too generous appreciation of his labours, by critics, the Editor is grateful : and for the rapid sale of the volume, he returns hearty thanks to many friends.

All Saints, 1893.

Preface

'Carmina Mariana' is the result of some years' labour in collecting, choosing and arranging materials for an Anthology of English Poetry, in a wide sense of the words, from Chaucer to Tennyson—both poets being included—in honour of, or having for its main theme, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The plan and wish of the Compiler, however imperfectly he may have been able to fulfil them, can be briefly described as two-fold :

I. To exhibit, within the compass of a single volume, a considerable body of English Verse written in the past, in connexion with the name of Mary ; and

II. To present translations from foreign languages, of poetry concerning our Blessed Lady, either of classical reputation in itself, or representative of a numerous class, or which bears the special 'imprimatur' of the Church.

The materials which have been employed to these ends may be specified more in detail, as follows :

1. Selections of moderate length from the works, original or translated, of the greater English poets, in which reverence for, or devotion to, Mary is united with high and true poetic achievement.

2. Shorter poems, mostly lyrical, many of which have been contributed by writers—English, Irish, and American—of the present and the past generation.

3. Examples, or paraphrases from Early English sources, verbally modernised, or printed in modern spelling—although, in a few instances, the old spelling has been retained.

4. Translations, old and new, mostly of marked devotional character, from foreign tongues—hymns from the Syriac and Armenian, odes from the Greek, sequences from the Latin, 'laude' from the Italian, and sonnets from the Spanish and Portuguese, together with gleanings from other languages. And here have been included certain poems of very ancient date, little known, but of exceptional value, as offering early testimony to the veneration of the Mother of God.

5. Quotations of, or from legendary poetry, ballads, carols, elegies, dramatic scenes, passion-plays and Laments of our Lady, cradle-songs and lullabies, descriptions of celebrated pictures, together with songs, hymns and prayers in metre, not meant for public use.

6. Short pieces of poetry from many sources, extracts and fragments, prologues and dedications, and the like —some from authors whose works do not afford suitable passages for longer quotation.

Certain special materials of value which have been made available for this Anthology may be named :

i. Contributions have been obtained from the unpublished remains of two devout and skilful writers, who were early translators of hymns from Office-books of the Church.

ii. A manuscript collection of English and Latin verse, made nearly half-a-century ago, in view of a design similar to the present attempt, has been generously placed at the disposal of the Editor.

iii. Much material, anonymous and acknowledged, has been found imbedded, and in some cases forgotten, in

periodical literature of various dates, published in America and Ireland, as well as in England—especially in the 'Ave Maria' and 'Catholic World'; the 'Irish Monthly'; and 'Merry England' and the 'Month,' Catholic magazines belonging to the three countries respectively.

Three further points require notice. (1) As a rule, no devotional poetry, which has become familiar in our hymn-books and books of prayer, will be found in the collection. (2) Apart from the new translations, no original poetry, with few exceptions, appears for the first time in the volume. And (3) 'English Verse' includes poetry in our common mother-tongue, wheresoever written, all the world over.

An Anthology framed upon these lines, even if carefully planned and systematically matured, can hardly be expected to prove exhaustive, with whatever diligence all likely sources have been searched. Hence, it is probable that not a few poems, and perhaps even a few names of poets deserving a place, may here be found wanting. But in spite of many omissions, the present selection, as a repertory of English 'Carmina Mariana,' though not indeed complete, is more copious and varied than any other known to the Editor.

A Bibliographical List of authors, poems, and sources, has been prepared and circulated, which affords more definite and exact information than can here be given on the literary materials from which the collection has been derived. It indicates all the available matter, known to the compiler at the date when he gathered it together, which may be acceptable for quotation in an Anthology of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although the catalogue be long, yet the student of English literature will probably wonder that the list is not still longer; and the Editor, upon the representation of any reader,

will gladly add to it fresh authors, new poems, or unknown sources, which may have been forgotten or overlooked by him. The List will be forwarded to anyone who may be at the pains to apply to the Printers for a copy ; and it is intended to form the basis of a less imperfect catalogue which may be published in the future.

From this Bibliographical List a selection has been made, to as wide an extent as the limits of the book permitted—for, the List contains references to a far larger amount of material than could be included in the volume now completed. The method of quotation adopted in the selections which have been made, speaking generally, is as follows. As a rule that governs the majority of cases, the whole of each poem—especially of the shorter poems—is quoted at length. In poems capable of contraction, the length of which precludes the whole from being inserted, a portion only is given ; and omissions are indicated —where the context may be affected—by the employment of typographical marks of hiatus. In cases where the requirements of the subject-matter of any poem demanded a longer extract than one containing the point of the quotation—namely, a reference to our Blessed Lady—another plan has been adopted. Here, the context of the quotation is extracted, at more or less length, in order to set before the reader's eye, as it were, a picture in verse, wherein Mary stands as the central figure.

* * *

The above statement formed the main portion of a circular which was widely distributed before 'Carmina Mariana' was sent to the press, and little need be added to it. The result of a suggestion it contained, that those who sympathised with the purport of the book should combine together for its production, at a slight cost to each one, was successful. The proposal met with a

response sufficiently far extended to enable the Editor, seconded by the liberal business arrangements of the Printers, to produce 'Carmina Mariana' by subscription ; and his best thanks are returned to the many friends, known and unknown, on either side alike of the Atlantic and St. George's Channel, who have thus enabled him to publish the book.

The Editor's thanks are also heartily offered to many personal friends and others who have co-operated with him, in many various ways, to produce this composite volume. Without their valuable aid, his task could hardly have been accomplished. It is needless to particularise by name ; but a record in general terms, of obligations graciously accorded, will severally convey to each one concerned an implicit avowal of gratitude. Some Authors have allowed the reproduction of their original poems ; others have given time and thought to translations from living and dead languages ; and others, again, have modernised, for the first time, early poetry in our own mother-tongue. Editors—English, Irish, and American—have freely permitted their magazines to be searched, and the contents of them to be utilised in honour of Mary. Publishers have liberally sanctioned the use of their copyright property ; and executors have been not less willing to aid the work. As a rule, the utmost generosity and kindness have been extended to the Editor by writers, owners and publishers. Many friends have assisted in the way of suggestion and criticism ; and four of them have been unweariedly open to approach for counsel and advice, on special points of difficulty as they arose. One friend has carefully read through the whole of the proofs, with great advantage to exactitude in the printing of the poetry. Another charged himself with the not less labour of verifying the printed copies

with their original, or other texts, in the Library of the British Museum. An official 'Censor,' too, has been found—as a preliminary measure to the volume securing an 'Imprimatur'—not unwilling to perform the necessary and sometimes, though not in this case, thankless task. Nor may the Printers be forgotten, who not only made it materially easy for the volume to be issued, but also, did much to secure its issue in an artistic and workmanlike style: nor, again, several Booksellers, who have effectually assisted in securing the success of this venture. To all and to each of these coadjutors, in the work for our Lady's honour, the Editor is grateful; and he commends them for their reward to her, and through her, to her Divine Son.

The principle on which the selection of verse has been attempted in the following pages requires explanation. In contra-distinction to some collections, poetical merit has not been made the first, nor the main qualification for admission to this Anthology. Merit is only one of the factors which combinedly have guided the choice here exhibited of verse in honour of, or in relation to, our Blessed Lady. 'Carmina Mariana' professes to be a work of piety; but, it may be regarded also as a work of art: and the attempt to combine merit with edification constitutes its claim to existence. And this two-fold design of the book will, it is hoped, insure a certain amount of intelligent appreciation for its acceptance. For whilst some of the most beautiful poems in the language, having Mary for their central idea, appear in this volume, nothing has been printed which may justly be said to be wanting in edification. Of course, the merit displayed by so large and varied a collection of verse, old and new, must be different in degree. But, though a phrase, or a rhyme, of which severe criticism might complain, has

been insufficient to deprive the collection of an otherwise meritorious and edifying poem ; no amount of depth of thought, or felicity of expression, has been allowed to condone for verse that is distasteful to the moral sense, or is erroneous in religious belief. In short, the simplest form of verse, and the highest efforts of poetical talent, in connection with the sacred Person commemorated, appear side by side in this Anthology.

In the compilation of the work, an effort has been made to secure the exact reproduction of the text of the poems quoted. Where such a course has been practicable, proofs have been sent, often more than once, even across the Atlantic, to every writer, or to his representative ; and the selections from deceased authors have been subjected to careful verification. The quotations have been given 'verbatim'—printers' and other errors excepted —and with full acknowledgment of source and authorship in each case in the text. The only license which the Editor begged—and not always begged successfully—from all concerned to be granted to him, was to a large extent mechanical. He has striven, however vainly, to secure uniformity throughout the Anthology, in the matter of punctuation and spelling, in the use of capitals, and in the avoidance of italic letters and symbols which tend to disfigure the page, without enhancing the lucidity of the text.

The arrangement which has been followed in the position of the poems in 'Carmina Mariana,' as a rule, is alphabetical. No other method, though it is by no means faultless, seemed open to so few objections. But the alphabetical order has been applied, according to convenience and circumstances, both to the names of the authors and translators, and to the title, or subject matter of the verse. Practically, it proved difficult to

adopt any order with rigid uniformity; and the plan followed has generally speaking secured variety in the topics, as well as in the metre of the poetry here offered. With the help of the Indexes, it is hoped that no difficulty will be experienced in learning the contents of the book, nor in finding any given poem which it may include.

It only remains for the Editor to mention the Publishers to whom he is indebted for the use of their copyright poetry—the names of their clients being enclosed within brackets: Mr. George Allen, of Orpington (Miss Francesca Alexander); Messrs. Bell (Miss Anna Swanwick); Messrs. Blackwood (George Eliot); Messrs. Ellis & Elvey (D. G. Rossetti); Messrs. Macmillan (Lord Tennyson); Messrs. Masters & Co. (Gerard Moultrie); Messrs. Mathews & Lane (Michael Field); Messrs. Parker (John Keble); Messrs. Pickering & Chatto; and Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co. (Mr. and Mrs. Browning). In addition to the above, the following firms have generously allowed the reproduction of many poems, published by themselves, which find a place in these pages—Messrs. Burns & Oates; Messrs. Longman & Co.; Mr. John Murray; and Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. If any copyrights, belonging to other publishers or authors, have been unwittingly infringed, and in a few cases the owners of such rights could not be discovered, the Editor apologises beforehand, and trusts to their courtesy for pardon.

ORBY SHIPLEY

39, THURLOE SQUARE, S.W.
Christmas Eve, 1892

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Hail, Mary, Full of Grace

The Lord is with thee

Blessed art thou among Women

And Blessed is the Fruit of thy Womb

Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God

Pray for us, Sinners

Now and at the Hour of our Death

Amen

AD BEATAM VIRGINEM MARIAM.

LEO PP. XIII.

I

Ardet pugna ferox ; Lucifer ipse, videns,
Horrida monstra furens ex Acheronte vomit.
Ocius, alma Parens, ocius affer opem ;
Tu mihi virtutem, robur et adde novum ;
Contere virgineo monstra inimica pede.
Te duce, Virgo, libens aspera bella geram :
Diffugient hostes ; te duce, victor ero.

II

Auri dulce melos, dicere, Mater, Ave.
Dicere dulce melos, O pia Mater, Ave.
Tu mihi Deliciæ, Spes bona, castus Amor ;
Rebus in adversis tu mihi Præsidium.
Si, mens sollicitis icta cupidinibus,
Tristitiæ et luctus anxia sentit onus ;
Si, natum ærumnis videris usque premi,
Materno refove Virgo benigna sinu :
Et, cum instante aderit morte suprema dies
Lumina fessa manu molliter ipsa tege,
Et fugientem animam tu bona redde Deo.

Anthology

IN HONOUR OF

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

Sequences of the Church

ADAM OF ST. VICTOR: XII. CENTURY.

TRANSLATED (1892) *BY 'A.'*

I. FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

Salve, Mater Salvatoris.

HAIL, the Saviour's Blessed Mother,
Vase elect, above all other,
Full of honour, Full of grace ;
Fore-ordained from years eternal,
And, by Wisdom's hand supernal,
Wrought from Adam s ruined race.

Hail, the Heavenly Word forth-bringing,
Flower from the thorns up-springing,
Of the thorn-brake Glory born ;
We with many thorn-wounds redden.
Thou, the sinless other Eden,
Knowest not a single thorn.

Portal folded, Fount of garden,
Cell, of sweetest unguents Warden,
Fairest coloured Fragrancy ;
Frankincense and myrrh excelling,
Kinder than the solace welling
From the beauteous balsam tree.

Hail, the Virgins' Glory brightest,
Who to pray for men delightest,
Who didst bear the Child for us :
Hail, compassion's Myrtle-flower,
Rose, with patience for thy dower,
Nard, all odoriferous.

Vale among the mountains lying,
Field where no man plough is plying—
Oh, the harvest of that sod :
Lily of that valley lowly,
Blossom of that field all-holy,
Thence, Incarnate, springs our God.

Eden of the new creation,
Riftless Mount, whose exhalation
Is undying chastity :
Thou of whiteness, thou of sweetness,
Thou of beauty art completeness—
Tenderness abounds in thee.

In fair art and fair material,
O'er thrones earthly and aërial,
Throne of Solomon art thou :
Ivory of pureness telling,
Gold of charity's indwelling,
Mysteries that throne endow.

O'er all palms the Palm up-bearing,
None in heaven thy place is sharing,
  None on earth is peer of thine :
Praise of every generation,
Thy preëminent vocation
  Makes thee all, in all, outshine.

To the lunar beam like noonlight,
To the stars like queenly moonlight,
  Things create thou shinest above :
Light, that knows not obscuration,
Heat, that knows not deflagration—
  That, thy pureness ; this, thy love.

Hail, of holiness the Mother,
Full of grace above all other,
  Three-fold Godhead's three-fold Rest ;
Yet with providence maternal,
Waiting for the Word Eternal,
  Special Guest-chamber for Guest.

Star upon the blue sea shining,
Other stars at day declining,
Fairer far than angels lining
  Heavenly places, nine-fold Ray ;
From thy throne above the waters,
Pray for us, thy sons and daughters,
So, nor wile, nor threat of slaughters
  Make us stumble on the way.

Warriors of the high election,
Marshalled under strong protection,
May we see our flag's erection
And the crafty foe's dejection,
  Through thy Mother-potency :

Jesu, Word of God Most-highest,
Who to suppliants nought deniest,
Who free grace to souls suppliest—
Those who stand thy Mother nighest
Thou preserve and make like thee.

II. FOR FEASTS OF THE B. V. M.

Ave, Virgo Singularis.

Ave, Mary, Life's fair Portal,
Star of Ocean, Orb immortal,
Virgins' Glory, Virgins' Prime ;
Heart and flesh one whiteness sharing ;
Perfect Maidenhood, yet, bearing
Jesus Christ our Lord, in time.

He, the Mover of creation,
Loveliness and separation
Giving earth and sky and sea,
Lives and reigns and all things orders,
With no term, nor bound, nor borders
To his kingdom's majesty.

Heavenly mysteries unwinding,
For his name fit language finding,
Where is now the tongue of earth ?
Thought on thought man vainly masses,
Everlasting God surpasses
Thought, in greatness, beauty, worth.

Where are now thy laws, O Nature,
Time-coeval Legislature ?
Fruitful is a Virgin's womb :
Him, the Verity, conceiving ;
Her, the Virgin, not bereaving
Of dear honour's lily-bloom.

In the wondrous parturition,
As before the angel's mission,
  Pure was Mary as the morn ;
With no mother of his glory,
With no sire, in mortal story,
  God, the Word, in time was born.

Almond-blossom Rod adorning,
Star dilated to the Morning,
  Lo, a Virgin bears a Son ;
Morn, with light and beauteous favour,
Bloom, with fruit and pleasant savour,
  There, where light and fruit were none.

He, the Witness all unerring,
Him the True Light came averring
  Bread unfailing from above ;
Bread to sons of destitution
Asking life in absolution,
  Bread refreshing faith and love.

By the sin of Eva Mother,
Every flesh-descended brother
  Is despoiled of Life's true Breath ;
By the love of Mother Mary,
Life and health and sanctuary
  Come, replacing guilt and death.

O thou strong in deed and blessing,
Thou, whom angels come confessing,
  Mary, full of heavenly grace ;
Thee we laud, with supplication
That thy mighty mediation
  May our many stains erase.

Penitence our weakness nerving.
We confess the deeds deserving
Wrath of God retributive ;
O grief-soothing, O crown-wearing
Mother of the King cross-bearing,
Through thy pleadings we would live.

Orisons for sad ones say thou,
For the sinful pardon pray thou,
Queen, who art to God so dear :
So, may he who, not abhorring
Virgin's womb, came life-restoring,
Life-restoring reappear.

Mother of the mighty Maker
Of all being ; meek Partaker
In the new life of the Cross :
Be thy Son the Breach-repairer,
Be thy Son the Comfort-bearer
To the sons of grief and loss.

He the character vouchsafe us—
Patient, when misfortunes chafe us,
Lowly, in the sunshine hours ;
Faith and hope, the heavenly purest ;
Charity, with life-flame surest—
Charity the dower of dowers.

Chastity's undying beauty,
And the loyal fruit of duty,
Set within, without, our shrine ;
Let our life be blossom fairest,
Let our death be incense rarest
To the heart of Love Divine.

Father, Son, and Time-exceeding
Spirit, from the Twain proceeding,
Triune God—from heart and tongue,
To thy Name, with hope's elateness,
Praise, dominion, glory, greatness,
Now and evermore be sung.

'Divina Commedia'

DANTE ALIGHIERI: 1265–1321.

TRANSLATED (1797–1812) *BY H. F. CARY.*

VISION OF PARADISE: CANTO XXXII.

'Saint Bernard shows Dante, on their several thrones, other blessed souls, and tells him that, if he would obtain power to descry what remained of the Heavenly Vision, he must unite with him in supplication to Mary.' (Cary.)

FREELY the Sage, though wrapt in musings high,
Assumed the teacher's part, and mild began:

'The wound that Mary closed, she opened first
Who sits so beautiful at Mary's feet
The third in order; underneath her, lo,
Rachel with Beatrice; Sarah next;
Judith, Rebecca, and the gleaner-maid,
Meek ancestress of him who sang the songs
Of sore repentance in his sorrowful mood.
All as I name them, down from leaf to leaf,
Are in gradation thronèd on the Rose.
And from the seventh step successively,
Adown the breathing tresses of the flower,
Still doth the file of Hebrew dames proceed.
For these are a partition wall, whereby

The sacred stairs are severed, as the faith
In Christ divides them. On this part, where blooms
Each leaf in full maturity, are set
Such as in Christ, or e'er he came, believed.
On the other, where an intersected space
Yet shows the semicircle void, abide
All they who looked to Christ already come.
And as our Lady on her glorious stool,
And they who on their stools beneath her sit,
This way distinction make; e'en so on his,
The mighty Baptist that way marks the line
(He who endured the desert, and the pains
Of martyrdom, and for two years of hell,
Yet still continued holy), and beneath,
Augustine, Francis, Benedict, and the rest;
Thus far from round to round. So heaven's decree
Forecasts, this garden equally to fill
With faith in either view, past or to come.
Learn too, that downward from the step which cleaves
Midway the twain compartments, none there are
Who place obtain for merit of their own,
But have, through other's merit, been advanced
On set conditions; spirits all released,
Ere for themselves they had the power to choose.
And if thou mark and listen to them well,
Their childish looks and voice declare as much.

* * *

Now raise thy view
Unto the visage most resembling Christ:
For in her splendour only shalt thou win
The power to look on him.'

Forthwith, I saw
Such floods of gladness on her visage showered,
From holy spirits winging that profound,

That whatsoever I had yet beheld
Had not so much suspended me with wonder,
Or shown me such similitude of God.
And he who had to her descended once
On earth, now hailed in heaven; and on poised wing,
'Ave, Maria; Gratia Plena,' sang:
To whose sweet anthem all the blissful court,
From all parts answering, rang: that holier joy
Brooded the deep serene.
'Father revered,
Who deign'st for me to quit the pleasant place
Wherein thou sittest, by eternal lot,
Say, who that angel is, that with such glee
Beholds our Queen, and so enamoured glows
Of her high beauty, that all fire he seems.'

So I again resorted to the lore
Of my wise teacher, he whom Mary's charms
Embellished, as the sun the morning star;
Who thus in answer spake:
'In him are summed
Whate'er of buxomness and free delight
May be in spirit, or in angel met:
And so beseems; for that he bare the palm
Down unto Mary, when the Son of God
Vouchsafed to clothe him in terrestrial weeds.
Now let thine eyes wait heedful on my words;
And note thou of this just and pious realm
The chiefest nobles. Those highest in bliss,
The twain, on each hand next our Empress throned,
Are, as it were, two roots unto this Rose:
He to the left, the parent whose rash taste
Proves bitter to his seed; and on the right,
That ancient father of the holy Church,

Into whose keeping Christ did give the keys
Of this sweet flower; near whom, behold the Seer
That, ere he died, saw all the grievous times
Of the fair bride, who with the lance and nails
Was won. And near unto the other rests
The leader, under whom on manna fed
The ungrateful nation, fickle and perverse.
On the other part, facing to Peter, lo,
Where Anna sits, so well content to look
On her loved Daughter that, with moveless eye,
She chants the loud "Hosanna": while opposed
To the first father of your mortal kind,
Is Lucia, at whose hest thy lady sped,
When on the edge of ruin closed thine eye.

But (for the vision hasteneth to an end)
Here we break off, as the good workman doth
That shapes the cloak according to the cloth;
And to the primal love our ken shall rise;
That thou mayst penetrate the brightness, far
As sight can bear thee. Yet alas, in sooth,
Beating thy pennons, thinking to advance,
Thou backward fallest. Grace then, must first be gained—
Her grace whose might can help thee. Thou in prayer
Seek her: and with affection, whilst I sue,
Attend, and yield me all thy heart.'

NOTES.

Line 1: The Sage; St. Bernard. Line 3: She; Eve. 'Eve wounded; Mary healed': words attributed to St. Augustine. Line 7: Gleaner-maid; Ruth, the ancestress of David. Line 8: Him; David. Line 11: The Rose; The Company of the Blessed. Line 23: Stool; Throne. Line 28: Two years; The time that elapsed between the death of the Baptist and his liberation from Hades, after the resurrection of Christ. Hell; Hades. Line 43: The visage; i.e. Of our Blessed Lady. Line 52: He; Gabriel. Line 83: The Seer; St. John, the Apostle. (Mainly from Cary.)

Sacred Poetry of St. Alphonsus

ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI:

1696–1787.

TRANSLATED BY EDMUND VAUGHAN, C.SS.R.

FROM 'HYMNS AND VERSES ON SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS,' 1863.

I. MARY, OUR HOPE.

Mary, thou art Hope the brightest,
Love most pure and sweet;
Life and peace I find, reposing
At thy blessed feet.
When I call on thee, O Mary,
When I think on thee,
Joy and pleasure all-entrancing
Fill my heart with glee.

If anon the clouds of sadness
Rise within my heart,
When they hear thy name, O Mary,
Quickly they depart.
Like a star on life's dark ocean
Shining o'er the wave,
Thou canst guide my bark to harbour,
Thou my soul canst save.

Under thy protecting mantle,
Queen beloved, I fly;
There, I wish to live securely;
There, I hope to die.

When I come my life to finish,
Mary, loving thee,
Then I also know, dear Lady,
Heaven is gained for me.

Cast thy gentle bonds around me,
And my heart enchain,
Prisoner of love for ever
Safe will I remain.
Thus my heart, O sweetest Mary,
Is not mine, but thine:
Take it; give it all to Jesus;
Ne'er shall it be mine.

II. ASPIRATIONS TO MARY.

Knowest thou, sweet Mary,
Whereto I aspire?
'Tis my hope to love thee—
This is my desire.
I would e'er be near thee,
Queen most fair and sweet;
Do not, do not drive me
From my Mother's feet.
Then, O Rose most lovely,
Let me hear from thee;
Loving Mother, tell me,
What thou wilt of me.
More I cannot offer—
Lo, I bring my heart;
Lovingly I give it,
Ne'er from thee to part.
Lady, thou didst take it,
'Tis no longer mine;
Long since thou didst love it,
And its love was thine.

Do not then forsake me,
Mother of sweet Love,
Till one day thou greet me
Safe in heaven above.

III. ON THE LOVELINESS OF MARY.

Raise your voices, vales and mountains,
Flowery meadows, streams and fountains,
Praise, oh, praise the loveliest Maiden
Ever the Creator made.
Murmuring brooks, your tribute bringing,
Little birds with joyful singing,
Come with mirthful praises laden—
To your Queen be homage paid.

Say, sweet Virgin, we implore thee,
Say, what beauty God sheds o'er thee:
Praise and thanks to him be given,
Who in love created thee.
Like a sun with splendour glowing,
Gleams thy heart with love o'erflowing;
Like the moon in starry heaven,
Shines thy peerless purity.

Like the rose and lily blooming,
Sweetly heaven and earth perfuming,
Stainless, spotless, thou appearest—
Queenly beauty graces thee.
But to God, in whom thou livest,
Sweeter joy and praise thou givest,
When to him in beauty nearest,
Yet so humble thou canst be.

American Verse from 'the Catholic World,' New York, 1868–1888.

VARIOUS WRITERS.

I. ROSARY BEADS.

White Beads.

From loving fingers drop the Ave-beads—
White, as the lilies Gabriel doth bear,
Greeting the Angels' Queen, whose maiden prayer
Pleads with Jehovah her loved Israel's needs:
White, as the snow that lieth Christmas morn,
Unbroken yet by footstep falling o'er:
White, as the doves the humble Mother bore
Unto the temple, with her pure First-born:
White, as her soul to whom we trustful call,
Mindful of life that sudden perisheth,
'Ave, Maria; hold us dear in death,
Loosen with thy pure touch from earthly thrall
Our struggling prayers, so poor and faint of breath'—
So each white bead grows perfect act of faith.

Green Beads.

Drop one by one the beads of malachite,
By martyr-pontiff blessed—'Cross of the cross,'
Brave hope uplifted in night's hour of loss,
Strong light unfailing in wrong's night of might.
Thoughts steeped in tears fall with each rounded gem—
The bitter chalice of Gethsemani;
The rabble's choice of Cæsar's sovereignty;
Rome seeming shadow of Jerusalem,

Saint-trodden city still more blessed grown
Through gentle presence of a wounded heart—
Of heavenly model earthly counterpart—
Bearing the cross 'mid mockery from its own ;
Blest cross, that shineth in tear-clouded eyes,
E'er-budding hope of opening paradise.

Red Beads.

And last, from lingering fingers fall the prayers
Of triumph, on blood-red cornelian told ;
Of love, that doth its heavenly glow unfold
To light the cross the Lamb-redeeming bears,
The shadow of the prisoned souls to break ;
Each prayer enkindled by the touch of love—
The Fire Divine descended from above
True life to give, pale embers to awake ;
Each bead a blossom of that marvellous bloom
That filled its Mistress' barren place of rest ;
The stony petals, with her dear name blest,
Breathing sweet charity's most rich perfume,
Burning with love of tender soul bent down
To kiss Christ's cross, his Mother's roses-crown.

NOTE.

No. I. Green Beads. Line 2 : 'Cross of the cross' ; the symbolical motto ascribed to Pope Pius IX. by the prophecy attributed to St. Malachi.

II. FULL OF GRACE.

Flowers in the field and odours on the air,
The spring-time everywhere ;
Music of singing birds and rippling rills,
Soft breezes from the hills ;
So broke the sweetest season, long ago,
Far from this death-cold snow

In that blest land which smiles to every eye,
Most favoured from on high ;
And in one town, whose sheltering mountains stand
Broad breast-plates of the land ;
So fair a spring-time, sure, was never seen,
Since Eden's walks were green.

A sudden glory flashed upon the air—
A face unearthly fair ;
A beauty given but to those alone
The nearest to the throne ;
The great archangels who upon their hair
The seven planets wear,
Lightly as diamonds—such the form that now,
With brilliant eyes and brow,
Paused by the humble dwellings of the poor,
Entered the humblest door,
Veiling his awful beauty, far too bright,
With wide wings, strong and white

Within the dwelling, where his flight was stayed,
A kneeling Woman prayed.
The angel bowed before that holy face,
And hailed her, 'Full of grace.'
No other title, not the kingly name
Which David's line can claim ;
Not highest rank, though unto her was given
Queenship of earth and heaven ;
Not as that one who gave life to the dead,
Bruising the serpent's head ;
Not even as Mother of the Sacrificed,
The World-redeeming Christ.

This thought might be a sermon while yet we,
Heirs of eternity,

Walk this brief, sin-surrounded tract of life,
Wage this short, sharpest strife,
Which must be passed and won before the rest,
The triumph of the blessed.
And when the hour supreme of fate shall come,
And at our promised home
We wait in breathless and expectant dread,
Between the quick and dead—
Then may the angel-warders of the place
Welcome us, 'full of grace.'

III. ECHOES TO MARY: A SPANISH POEM.

Who gently dries grief's falling tear? Maria.
Of fairy flowers, which fairest blows? The rose.
What seekest thou, poor plaining dove? My love.
Rejoice, thou mourning Dove:
Earth's peerless Rose, without a thorn,
Unfolds its bloom this natal morn—
Maria, Rose of Love.

What craves the heart of storms the sport? A port.
And what, the fevered patient's quest? Calm rest.
What ray to cheer when shadows slope? Hope.
O Mary, Mother blest,
Through nights of gloom, through days of fear,
Thy love the ray by which to steer,
Bright Hope, to Port of Rest.

Desponding heart, what gift will please? Heart of ease.
What scent reminds us of a hidden saint? Jessamine faint.
What caught its hue from the azure sky? Violet's-eye.
O Mary, peerless Dower,
A balm to soothe, love's odour sweet,

A glimpse of heaven, in thee we greet—
Heart's-ease, Jessamine, Violet-flower.

Of Mary's love, who most secure? The pure.
What lamp diffuses light afar? A star.
When is light-wingèd zephyr born? At morn.
Mine eyes, with watching worn,
Will vigil keep till day returns;
To see thy light my spirit yearns,
Mary Pure, Star of Morn.

What name most sweet to dying ear? Maria.
On heavenly hosts who smiles serene? Their Queen.
What joy is perfected above? Love.
Welcome, thou spotless Dove:
Awake, my soul; celestial mirth
This day brings purest joy to earth—
Maria, Queen of Love.

IV. NOT YET.

Methought the King of Terrors came my way,
Whom all men flee, and none esteem it base.
But lo, his smile forbidding me dismay,
I stood—and dared to look him in the face.
'So soon,' the only murmur in my heart:
For I had shaped the deeds of many years—
Ambitioning atonement; and in part,
To reap in joy what I had sown in tears.
Then, turning to our Lady: 'O my Queen,
'Twere very sweet already to have won
My crown, and pass to see as I am seen,
And never more offend thy blessed Son:
Yet would I stay—and for myself, I own—
To stand at last the nearer to thy throne.'

V THE ANNUNCIATION.

'*I. D.*'

Ave, Gratia Plena.

POISED on the well's mossed brink the unfilled ewer ;
And one dropped lily at her whiter feet
Unnoted. Does she listen? What sound so sweet,
Her soul from out the bosom's coverture
Into those raptured eyes, could so allure?
Or, with some vision unfolded there where meet
Wan sands and sky-line, is her sense replete?
Nay, but not these ; but lo, God's time mature.
Lo, the lit air, the sudden glory poured
And fragrance shed ; and from the splendid space
Forth-issuing, as a passion freighted chord
Midst some vast minster's echoing arches waking,
A voice, in wave on wave of sweetness, breaking
Upon her spell-bound soul, 'Hail ; Full of grace.'

Fiat Mihi.

WHAT tremor of delight thrills earth and sky,
And wakes the nested birds, and turns the air
From violet to gold? And hark, what rare
Sphere-music mingles with the numerous sigh
Of wind-swayed palms? And mark, how crimsoned lie
The lone and glimmering sands. Ah, grown aware
Of God, the quickened earth is loth to fare
Into the joyless night. Thou shalt not die,
O crown of all days risen. For, ne'er since broke
The primal dawn, when stars of morning heard
God's voice and sang together, ne'er since woke
Its myriad life, has Nature so been stirred
To the great soul's deeps, as when this Maiden spoke,
And in her womb Incarnate lay the Word.

Ecce, Ancilla Domini.

HANDMAIDEN—but Queen crowned and throned above
God's kingdoms and all hearts—hence, nevermore
Shall one in dreams the hidden realms explore
Of absolute loveliness, and know not of
This perfect face now radiant with new love—
Thy rare face unrecorded—and before
Thy beauty shall not all his heart outpour
Transfigured, e'en as now, beneath the Dove,
Beside thy ewer, beside the brimming well,
The bending palm o'erhead, and at thy feet,
In the well's imaged heavens, one tremulous star;
While, at thy heart, that song oracular
Gathers to fulness, and inviolable
Sweet Maidenhood and Motherhood first meet.

VI. LE REPOS EN EGYPTE: THE SPHINX.

AGNES REPPLIER.

ALL day I watch the stretch of burning sand;
All night I brood beneath the golden stars;
Amid the silence of a desolate land,
No touch of bitterness my reverie mars.
Built by the proudest of a kingly line,
Over my head the centuries fly fast;
The secrets of the mighty dead are mine;
I hold the key of a forgotten past.
Yet, ever hushed into a rapturous dream,
I see again that night. A halo mild
Shone from the liquid moon. Beneath her beam
Travelled a tired young Mother and her Child.
Within mine arms she slumbered, and alone
I watched the Infant. At my feet her guide
Lay stretched o'er-wearied. On my breast of stone
Rested the Crucified.

VII. MOTHERHOOD.

GEORGE ROTHSAY.

'Behold thy Mother, Son,' he said whose word
His mystic presence to our altars gave,
Whose holy feet trod Galilee's dark wave.
The gentle voice whose whispers he had heard
Where Egypt's breezes the palm branches stirred,
John, the beloved, from grief's despond to save,
The hand that oft his infant brow did lave,
Henceforth to minister to him preferred.

Oh, be it Motherhood, like Bethlehem's, sweet,
Or of Golgotha's sorrow-freighted hour,
God hath ordained it, to his mind most meet,
Made woman's heart the agent of his power.
Though other loves man's trust through life may cheat,
These will remain, through all unchanged, of strength
a tower.

VIII. JEANNE D'ARC.

THOMAS EWING STEELE.

Full many a time in earth's eventful day
A virgin's strength hath made the people free,
A virgin's hand the tyrant dared to slay,
A virgin's soul hath bowed to fate's decree.
Saved by a Virgin—runs the Jewish tale;
Homeric echoes chant the monody;
The Roman sibyls' wild, prophetic wail
Sang of 'the Virgin' that was yet to be.
So in that sunny land beyond the sea,
When savage warfare bade the folk despair,
A maiden, dauntless as her fame is fair—
A virgin clad in heaven's panoply—
Drove the oppressor to the further shore,
And freed the ungrateful people evermore.

'Students'-day' in the National Gallery, London

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD.

FROM 'IN MY LADY'S PRAISE,' 1890.

Written when she was copying the Madonna of Perugino, 1868

OUT of all the hundred fair Madonnas
Seen in many a rich and distant city—
Sweet Madonnas, with the mother's bosoms ;
Sad Madonnas, with the eyes of anguish ;
Rapt Madonnas, caught in clouds to heaven
(Clouds of golden, glad, adoring angels)—
She of Florence in 'the Chair,' so perfect ;
She that was the 'Grand Duke's' wealth and glory
She that makes the picture of 'the Goldfinch' ;
Ghirlandajo's with the cloak and jewels ;
Guido's Queen, whom men and angels worship ;
Della Robbia's best ; and that sweet 'Perla,'
Seville's bright boast, Mary of Murillo
(Painted, so they vow, with milk and roses) ;
Guido Reni's 'Quadro' at Bologna ;
Munich's masterpiece, grim Dürer's Goddess ;
Yes, and thy brave work, Beltraffio mio—
Many as the lessons are I owe them,
Thanks and wonder, worship, grateful memories,
Oftenest I shall think of Perugino's.

Do you know it? Either side a triptych
Stands an armed archangel, as to guard her,
Glorious, with great wings and shining armour :
In the middle panel, pure and tender,
Clasping close her hands, with adoration,
(All the mother's love, the mortal's worship,

In their yearning, in their reverence, painted)
Gazes Mary on the Child. A seraph
Holds him, smiling, at her knees ; and smiling,
Looks she down with spirit humbly-happy,
Full, to the heart's brim, of the peace of heaven.
Reverence mingles with the Mother's passion,
But no touch of sadness, or of doubting.
Far away a river runneth seaward,
(Little now, like truth ; like truth, to widen)
Leads the light across a blue dim country,
Under peaks, by forests, to the ocean :
Soft and warm, a pearly sky broods over
Where three winged-ones, at the Father's footstool,
Sing the 'Peace and goodwill' song to mortals.
If you ask me, why that Perugino
Of the rest can never be forgotten,
Let this serve : I learned a lesson by it,
Watching one whose light and faithful fingers—
Following touch by touch her lovely labour—
Caught the master's trick and made him modern.
While she bent above her new Madonna,
Laid the lucid smalts and touched the crimsons,
Swept the shadows under the gilt tresses,
Smoothed the sinless brows, and drooped the eyelids
(What the master did, so also doing).
I bethought me : True and good the toil is ;
Noble thus to double gifts of beauty ;
Yet, alas, this 'Peace and good-will' anthem—
If the dear Madonna knew what ages,
Slowly following ages, would creep o'er us,
And those words be still as wind that passes,
Breathing fragrance from a land we know not,
Sighing music to a tune we catch not,
Stirring hearts, as leaves, in the night, a little

Shake, and sleep again, and wait for sunlight
(Sweet, glad sunlight, oh, so long a-coming),
Would she smile so? I had painted rather
(While she listened to those singing angels)
Mary, with a sword-blade in her bosom
(Sword that was to pierce her heart, of all hearts);
I had shown her with deep eyes of trouble,
Half afraid to credit that evangel;
I had limned her 'pondering all those sayings,'
All our later agonies foreseeing,
After all our years have heard 'the tidings.'

But the artist, painting bold and largely;
Washing soft and clear the broadening colours;
With a liberal brush, at skilful working,
Linking lights and shadows on the visage,
Dropped by hazard there one drop of water.
Lo, a tear, I thought, that teaches Pietro;
That is wiser than the master's wisdom;
Now the picture's meaning will be perfect;
For she could not be so calm, Christ's Mother,
Could she? even though archangels kept her,
Could she? even though those sang in heaven,
Knowing how her world would roll beyond them,
Twenty centuries past this sacred moment,
Out of sound of this angelic singing;
Loaded with the wrongs Christ's justice rights not,
Reddened with the blood Christ's teachings stanch not,
Reeking with the tears Christ's pity stays not.
Let the tear shine there: it suits the story:
Tear and smile go wondrous well together,
Seeing that this song was sung by angels,
Seeing that the foolish world gainsays it.
That one lustrous drop completes the picture:
You forgot it, Peter of Perugia.

Ah, I did not know an artist's wisdom ;
I had still to learn my deepest lesson :
She I watched, with better thought inspired,
Took some tender colour in her pencil
(Faint dawn-colour, blush of rose, I marked not),
Touched the tear and melted it to brightness ;
Spread it in a heavenly smile all over ;
Magically made it turn to service ;
Till that tear, charged with its rosy tintings,
Deepened the first sweet smile, and left it lovelier—
Like the master's work, complete, sufficient.

Then I thought : Pietro's wise Madonna
Was too wise to weep at little sorrows :
Christ and she and heaven and all the angels
Last—'tis sin, and grief, alone which passes.
Roses grow of dew, and smiles from weeping ;
Sweetest smile is made of saddest tear-drop ;
She hath not forgotten we shall suffer ;
In her heart that sword, to the heft, is planted :
But beyond the years, she sees time over ;
Past the Calvary, she counts the 'mansions.'
Dear Madonna, wise to be so happy,
Should you weep, because we have not listened ?
We shall listen : and his Mother knows it.
This is why, of many rare Madonnas,
Most of all I think on Perugino's,
I, who know so many more and love them ;
This is why I thank my gentle artist,
She who taught me that, a student's wisdom.

NOTES.

Lines 7, 8, and 9 : By Raphael, at Florence. Line 10 : At Florence. Line 11 : Guido da Siena, a predecessor of Cimabue, xiii. century, at Florence. Line 12 : At Florence. Line 17 : In the Louvre, Paris. Line 20 : In the National Gallery, London.

Art Studies

I. HYMN OF NOVALIS— G. F. P. VON HARDENBERG: 1772–1801.

HENRY CURWEN.

FROM 'SORROW AND SONG,' 1875.

I HAVE seen thee in the visions of the master-minds of time,
In a thousand pictured glories of a loveliness sublime;
And with these, and sweet brain-fancies, would my longing fondly weave thee;
But, to mortal eyes thou comest not, as my soul did once perceive thee:
And since then, the roar and turmoil of the weary world is stilled,
And with harmonies of heaven hath my daily life been thrilled.

II. ST. LUKE PAINTING THE VIRGIN: A PICTURE BY VAN DER WEYDEN.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1876.

IT was Luke's will: and she, the Mother-Maid,
Would not gainsay; to please him pleased her best.
See, here she sits, with dovelike heart at rest,
Brooding, and smoothest brow; the Babe is laid
On lap and arm, glad for the unarrayed
And swatheless limbs he stretches. Lightly pressed
By soft maternal fingers, the full breast
Seeks him, while half a sidelong glance is stayed

By her own bosom, and half passes down
To reach the Boy. Through door and window-frame
Bright airs flow in; a river tranquilly
Washes the small, glad Netherlandish town.
Innocent calm: no token here of shame,
A pierced heart, sunless heaven, and Calvary.

III. RELIQUARIES: A FRAGMENT.

DAVID GRAY: 1836–1888.

FROM 'LIFE, POEMS, ETC,' BUFFALO, NEW YORK, 1888.

I THINK—while softer fancies sleep—
Of those old altar-pictures quaint,
Which pure-souled Memm'ling loved to paint;
Or, those that in fair Florence keep
His fame, as limner and as saint,
Who, kneeling, painted heaven—and so,
Was named of men 'Angelico.'
All shut, such reliquaries stand,
Rich paintings on each folded lid
That keeps the inner beauty hid,
And almost one is stopped to gaze,
And half—before the doors expand—
Would lift the censer of his praise.
But, open; and there straightway beam
Such glories of the fairer dream,
All other light is quenched than its.
Unclouded glows the golden air,
And ringed with heaven's own aureole,
The very deep of beauty's soul
Throbs visible, where the Virgin sits.

IV. ON A PICTURE OF THE ASSUMPTION: AFTER FRAY LOUIS PONCE DE LEON: 1528–1591.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW: 1807–1882.

LADY, thine upward flight
The opening heavens receive with joyful song;
Blest who thy mantle bright
May seize among the throng,
And to the sacred mount float peacefully along.

Bright angels are around thee;
They that have served thee from thy birth are there;
Their hands with stars have crowned thee;
Thou, peerless Queen of Air,
As sandals to thy feet, the silver moon dost wear.

V. ON A HOLY FAMILY: BY J. WOLFGANG VON GOETHE: 1749–1832.

W. EDMONSTOUNE AYTOUN: 1813–1865.

FROM 'POEMS AND BALLADS OF GOETHE,' 1859.

O CHILD of beauty rare—
O Mother, chaste and fair—
How happy seem they both, so far beyond compare.
She in her Infant blest,
And he in conscious rest,
Nestling within the soft warm cradle of her breast.
What joy that sight might bear
To him who sees them there,
If, with a pure and guilt-untroubled eye,
He looked upon the twain, like Joseph standing by.

VI. FOR 'OUR LADY OF THE ROCKS': BY LEONARDO DA VINCI.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI: 1828–1882.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1870; REVISED, 1881.

Mother, is this the darkness of the end,
The shadow of death? And is that outer sea
Infinite, imminent eternity?
And does the death-pang, by man's seed sustained
In time's each instant, cause thy face to bend
Its silent prayer upon the Son, while he
Blesses the dead, with his hand silently,
To his long day which hours no more offend?

Mother of Grace, the pass is difficult,
Keen as these rocks; and the bewildered souls
Throng it like echoes, blindly shuddering through.
Thy name, O Lord, each spirit's voice extols,
Whose peace abides in the dark avenue,
Amid the bitterness of things occult.

VII. LINES FOR A DRAWING OF 'OUR LADY OF THE NIGHT.'

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

FROM 'THE USHAW MAGAZINE,' 1890.

This, could I paint my inward sight,
This, were our Lady of the Night:
She bears on her front's lucency
The starlight of her purity:
For as the white rays of that star
The union of all colours are,
She sums all virtues that may be
In her sweet light of purity.

The mantle which she holds on high
Is the great mantle of the sky.
Think, O sick toiler, when the night
Comes on thee, sad and infinite,
Think, sometimes, 'tis our own Lady
Spreads her blue mantle over thee,
And folds the earth, a wearied thing,
Beneath its gentle shadowing:
Then rest a little; and in sleep
Forget to weep, forget to weep.

VIII. THE VIRGIN MARY LOOKING THROUGH A WINDOW AT THE CROSS, WHICH IS ONLY SUGGESTED: A PICTURE BY PAUL DELAROCHE.

RICHARD WILTON, M.A.

FROM 'WOOD-NOTES,' 1873.

AWE-STRUCK, she gazes through an open space,
Or lattice, at that mystery of woe,
Which art abashed attempts not here to show:
But, every tragic circumstance we trace
Reflected in the anguish of her face.
The sight, unseen by us, we darkly know
From those affrighted eyes, that Form bent low,
On which the last rays fall of sinking grace.
Thus through faith's lattice, as I daily gaze
On that sad vision veiled from worldly eyes,
May the great sight control my words and ways,
And all my life transform and solemnise;
That eyes, which see not him, may see in me
Some reflex of the saving tragedy.

Ave, Maria; a Breton Legend, 1877

ALFRED AUSTIN.

FROM 'SOLILOQUIES IN SONG,' 1882.

In the Ages of Faith, before the day
When men were too proud to weep, or pray,
There stood in a red-roofed Breton town,
Snugly nestled 'twixt sea and down,
A chapel for simple souls to meet
Nightly, and sing with voices sweet,
'Ave, Maria.'

There was an Idiot, palsied, bleared,
With unkempt locks and a matted beard,
Hunched from the cradle, vacant-eyed,
And whose head kept rolling from side to side;
Yet who, when the sunset-glow grew dim,
Joined with the rest in the twilight hymn,
'Ave, Maria.'

But, when they up-got and wended home,
Those up the hill-side, these to the foam,
He hobbled along in the narrowing dusk,
Like a thing that is only hull and husk;
On as he hobbled, chanting still,
Now to himself, now loud and shrill,
'Ave, Maria.'

When morning smiled on the smiling deep,
And the fisherman woke from dreamless sleep,
And ran up the sail, and trimmed his craft,
While his little ones leaped on the sand and laughed,
The senseless cripple would stand and stare,
Then, suddenly holloa his wonted prayer,
'Ave, Maria.'

Others might plough and reap and sow,
Delve in the sunshine, spin in snow,
Make sweet love in a shelter sweet,
Or trundle their dead in a winding sheet ;
But he, through rapture and pain and wrong,
Kept singing his one monotonous song,
'Ave, Maria.'

When thunder growled from the ravelled wrack,
And ocean to welkin bellowed back,
And the lightning sprang from its cloudy sheath,
And tore through the forest with jaggèd teeth ;
Then, leaped and laughed o'er the havoc wreaked,
The Idiot clapped with his hands, and shrieked,
'Ave, Maria.'

Children mocked and mimicked his feet,
As he slouched, or sidled, along the street ;
Maidens shrank as he passed them by,
And mothers with child eschewed his eye ;
And half in pity, half scorn, the folk
Christened him, from the words he spoke,
'Ave, Maria.'

One year, when the harvest feasts were done,
And the mending of tattered nets begun,
And the kittiwake's scream took a weirder key,
From the wailing wind and the moaning sea,
He was found, at morn, on the fresh-strewn snow,
Frozen and faint and crooning low,
'Ave, Maria.'

They stirred up the ashes between the dogs,
And warmed his limbs by the blazing logs,
Chafed his puckered and bloodless skin,
And strove to quiet his chattering chin ;
But, ebbing with unreturning tide,
He kept on murmuring till he died,
'Ave, Maria.'

Idiot, soulless, brute from birth,
He could not be buried in sacred earth ;
So they laid him afar, apart, alone,
Without or a cross, or turf, or stone,
Senseless clay unto senseless clay,
To which none ever came nigh to say,
'Ave, Maria.'

When the meads grew saffron, the hawthorn white,
And the lark bore his music out of sight,
And the swallow outraced the racing wave,
Up from the lonely, outcast grave
Sprouted a lily, straight and high,
Such as she bears to whom men cry,
'Ave, Maria.'

None had planted it ; no one knew
How it had come there, why it grew ;
Grew up strong, till its stately stem
Was crowned with a snow-white diadem—
One pure lily, round which, behold,
Was written by God, in veins of gold,
'Ave, Maria.'

Over the lily they built a shrine,
Where are mingled the mystic Bread and Wine—
Shrine you may see in the little town
That is snugly nestled 'twixt deep and down :
Through the Breton land it hath wondrous fame,
And it bears the unshriven Idiot's name,
'Ave, Maria.'

Hunchbacked, gibbering, blear-eyed, halt,
From forehead to footstep one foul fault,
Crazy, contorted, mindless-born,
The gentle's pity, the cruel's scorn—
Who shall bar you the Gates of Day,
So you have simple faith to say,
'Ave, Maria'?

Authors' Invocations to Mary

I. AUTHOR'S PRAYER FOR HIMSELF AND HIS READER.

EDWARD CASWALL, OF THE ORATORY, M.A.: 1814–1878.

FROM THE SECOND EDITION OF A 'TALE OF TINTERN,' CANTO VI., 1873.

O THOU, dear Glory of the Skies,
And Queen of our new Paradise,
Who ever wert so good to me
And art so high in dignity,
That it transcendeth human heart
So to conceive thee as thou art,
Thus far my bark has safe been steered—
But now, the risk I long have feared
Approaching, much I feel dismay,
Lest I should aught unworthy say
Of that sweet Majesty so great,
Which men and angels venerate.
Ah then, true Poetess divine,
By that high canticle of thine
Whose words enchant the world, my need
Assist, nor less of those who read,
That, while beneath an outward guise
I shadow hidden verities,
They of my parable aright
May judge, nor, unobservant quite,
A lower meaning bear away
Where it a higher would convey.

II. AUTHOR'S ENTREATY FOR HIS LAY.

BROTHER EYSTEIN, REGULAR

OF THE MONASTERY OF THYKKVIBŒR.

TRANSLATED (1870) *BY EIRIKR MAGNUSSON.*

FROM 'LILJA (THE LILY)'; AN ICELANDIC RELIGIOUS POEM OF THE XIV. CENTURY.

THEE, May and Mother, I entreat
That, by thine intercession sweet,
From out my mouth a truthful lore
In verses smoothly wrought may pour ;
That, from my lips both soft and bright,
As if in glowing gold bedight,
The words proclaimed of old may ring ;
To God that gift I needs must bring.

* * *

This Mary is our Mother bright,
With honour decked, a Flower of might,
And bloometh like a ruddy rose,
Which by a living fountain grows ;
A fragrant Root of lowliness ;
A Ray of the Spirit's holiness ;
She loves but God and who are good ;
In virtue is she like to God.

* * *

Thou, Mary, art our Mother bright ;
Thou, Mary, art with honour dight ;
Thou, Mary, beamest bright with love—
O Mary, baleful sin remove ;
O Mary, by our faults and fears,
O Mary, heed our flowing tears ;
O Mary, our great afflictions calm ;
Pour, Mary, o'er our wounds thy balm.

* * *

With loving kindness, Mary, deign
My heart to fill, as I would fain,
That, if I might still farther bring
My lay, thy praise therein should ring ;
But, higher praise, in verses made
On Christ's dear Mother could ne'er be said,
Than, that thou art by God alone,
O May, in purity outshone.

III. TO ASK OUR LADY'S PATRONAGE FOR A BOOK ON COLUMBUS: A FRAGMENT.

THOMAS D'ARCY McGEE: 1825–1868.

Star of the Sea, to whom, age after age,
The maiden kneels whose lover sails the sea ;
Star, that the drowning death-pang can assuage,
And shape the soul's course to eternity ;
Mother of God, in Bethlehem's crib confined,
Mother of God, to Egypt's realm exiled,
Thee do I ask to aid my anxious mind,
And make this book find favour with thy Child.

Of one who lived and laboured in thy ray,
I would rehearse the striving and success ;
Through the dense past I ne'er shall find my way,
Unless thou helpest, holy Comfortress :
A world of doubt and darkness to evade ;
An ocean all unknown to Christian kind ;
Another world by nature's self arrayed,
O'er the wide waste of waves, I seek to find.

IV. APPEAL FOR ILLUMINATION.

LUIGI PULCI: 1431–1487.

TRANSLATED BY GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON: 1788–1824.

FROM THE 'MORGANTE MAGGIORE,' CANTO I. STANZA 2.

And thou, O Virgin, Daughter, Mother, Bride
Of the same Lord, who gave to you each key
Of heaven and hell, and everything beside,
The day thy Gabriel said 'All hail' to thee,
Since to thy servants pity's ne'er denied,
With flowing rhymes, a pleasant style and free—
Be to my verses, then, benignly kind,
And to the end illuminate my mind.

V. PRAYER FOR INSPIRATION.

SINCERUS SANNAZARIUS: 1458–1530.

TRANSLATED (1839) *BY JOHN C. EUSTACE.*

FROM 'THE DELIVERY OF THE VIRGIN,' BOOK III.

Celestial Queen,
Thou on whom men below and saints above
Their hopes repose; on whom the bannered hosts
Of heaven attend—ten thousand squadrons armed,
Ten thousand cars self-moved, the clarion shrill,
The trumpet's voice—while round in martial pomp,
Orb within orb, the thronging seraphs wheel:
If on thy fane, of snow-white marble reared,
I offer yearly garlands; if I raise
Enduring altars in the hollowed rock
Where Mergyllina, lifting her tall head,
Looks down upon the foamy waves beneath—
A sea-mark to the passing sailor's eye;
If, with due reverence to thy name, I pay
The solemn rites, the sacrificial pomp,
When each returning year we celebrate

The wondrous mystery of the Birth Divine—
Do thou assist thy feeble bard, unused
To tasks so great and wandering on his way :
Guide thou my efforts and inspire my song.

VI. THE POET'S PETITION FOR HIS SONG.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY: 1792–1822.

FROM 'EPIPSYCHIDION,' 1821.

SERAPH of Heaven, too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
All that is insupportable in thee
Of light and love and immortality :
Sweet Benediction in the eternal curse ;
Veiled Glory of this lampless universe ;
Thou Moon beyond the clouds ; thou living Form
Among the dead ; thou Star above the storm ;
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror ;
Thou Harmony of nature's art ; thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendour of the sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on ;
Aye, even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow—
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy :
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

NOTES.

No. II. Lines first and last : May ; May is the true Middle-English form of Maid, Maiden, or Virgin. (Translator.) No. V. Line 11 : Mergyllina ; Villa Mergyllina, the gift to the poet by his patron, Frederick, King of Naples. No. VI. Line 9 : Terror ; 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array?' Cant. vi. 9. Opinions are divided on Shelley's intention in the personal object of his invocation. (Editor.)

Hymns from the Little Office of Our Lady

ATTRIBUTED, EXCEPT TWO STANZAS, TO

VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS, BISHOP OF POITIERS: VI. CENTURY.

TRANSLATED (1845) *BY J. A. DOMINIC AYLWARD, O. P.:* 1813–1872.

I. AT MATINS:

Quem terra, pontus, æthera.

WHOM earth and sea and sky proclaim
The Ruler of their triple frame,
He, unto whom their praises rise,
Within the womb of Mary lies.
Her womb, the seat of every grace,
Is now the Lord's abiding place;
That Lord to whom the sun by day,
The moon by night, their homage pay.
O happy Mother that thou art,
Close underneath thy beating heart
Lies the Creator-God, who planned
The world he holds within his hand.
Blest by the herald-angel's tongue,
O'er thee God's shadowing Spirit hung
And filled thy womb—whence issued forth
The Long-desired of all the earth.
O Mary, Mother of all Grace
And Mercy to our sinful race,
Drive back the foe; and to thy Son
Lead thou our souls when life is done.
All glory be to thee, O Lord,
A Virgin's Son, by all adored;
And equal praise for ever greet
The Father and the Paraclete.

II. AT LAUDS:

O Gloriosa Domina.

O Glorious Lady, throned in light,
Sublime above the starry height,
Whose arms thine own Creator pressed,
A Suckling at thy sacred breast.
Through the dear Blossom of thy womb,
Thou changest hapless Eva's doom;
Through thee to contrite souls is given
An opening to their home in heaven.
Thou art the great King's Portal bright,
The shining Gate of living light;
Come then, ye ransomed nations, sing
The Life Divine 'twas hers to bring.
Mother of Love and Mercy mild,
Mother of graces undefiled,
Drive back the foe, and to thy Son
Lead thou our souls when life is done.
All glory be to thee, O Lord,
A Virgin's Son, by all adored,
With Sire and Spirit, Three in One,
While everlasting ages run.

III. AT PRIME, TERCE, SEXT, AND NONE:

Memento, Salutis Auctor.

Author of Grace, sweet Saviour mine,
Remember that thy flesh divine
From the unsullied Virgin came,
In likeness of our mortal frame.
Mother of Love and Mercy mild,
Mother of graces undefiled,
Protect us now from Satan's power,
And take us at life's closing hour.

All glory be to thee, O Lord,
A Virgin's Son, by all adored,
And equal praise for ever greet
The Father and the Paraclete.

IV. AT VESPERS:

Ave, Maris Stella.

Hail, thou brightest Star of Ocean;
Hail, thou Mother of our God;
Hail, thou Ever-sinless Virgin,
Gateway of the blest abode.
Ave; 'tis an angel's greeting—
Thou didst hear his music sound,
Changing thus the name of Eva—
Shed the gifts of peace around.
Burst the sinner's bonds in sunder;
Pour the day on darkling eyes;
Chase our ills; invoke upon us
All the blessings of the skies.
Show thyself a watchful Mother;
And may he our pleadings hear,
Who for us a helpless Infant
Owned thee for his Mother dear.
Maid, above all maids excelling,
Maid, above all maidens mild,
Freed from sin, oh, make our bosoms
Sweetly meek and undefiled.
Keep our lives all pure and stainless,
Guide us on our heavenly way,
'Till we see the face of Jesus,
And exult in endless day.
Glory to the Eternal Father;
Glory to the Eternal Son;
Glory to the Eternal Spirit:
Blest for ever, Three in One.

Ballad and Legends

I. THE VIRGIN MARY'S BANK.

A LEGEND OF INCHIDONY ISLAND.

JEREMIAH J. CALLANAN: 1795–1829.

THE evening star rose beauteous above the fading day,
As to the lone and silent beach the Virgin came to pray,
And hill and wave shone brightly in the moonlight's mellow fall;
But the bank of green, where Mary knelt, was brightest of them all.

Slow moving o'er the waters, a gallant bark appeared,
And her joyous crew looked from the deck, as to the land she neared;
To the calm and sheltered haven she floated like a swan,
And her wings of snow o'er the waves below, in pride and beauty shone.

The master saw our Lady, as he stood upon the prow,
And marked the whiteness of her robe, and the radiance of her brow;
Her arms were folded gracefully upon her stainless breast,
And her eyes looked up among the stars to him her soul loved best.

He showed her to his sailors, and he hailed her with a cheer;
And on the kneeling Virgin they gazed with laugh and jeer;
And madly swore, a form so fair they never saw before;
And they cursed the faint and lagging breeze that kept them from the shore.

The ocean from its bosom shook off the moonlight sheen,
And up its wrathful billows rose, to vindicate their Queen;
And a cloud came o'er the heavens, and a darkness o'er the land,
And the scoffing crew beheld no more that Lady on the strand.

Out burst the pealing thunder, and the lightning leaped about,
And rushing with his watery war, the tempest gave a shout,
And that vessel, from a mountain wave, came down with thundering shock,
And her timbers flew like scattered spray on Inchidony's rock.

Then loud from all that guilty crew one shriek rose wild and high:
But the angry surge swept over them and hushed their gurgling cry;
And with a hoarse exulting tone the tempest passed away,
And down, still chafing from their strife, the indignant waters lay.

When the calm and purple morning shone out on high Dunmore,
Full many a mangled corpse was seen on Inchidony's shore;
And to this day the fisherman shows where the scoffers sank,
And still he calls that hillock green, 'the Virgin Mary's Bank.'

II. THE VIRGIN MARY'S KNIGHT

A BALLAD OF THE CRUSADES.

THOMAS D'ARCY McGEE: 1825–1868.

BENEATH the stars in Palestine seven knights discoursing stood,
But not of warlike work to come, nor former fields of blood ;
Nor of the joy the pilgrims feel, prostrated far, who see
The hill where Christ's atoning Blood poured down the penal tree :
Their theme was old, their theme was new ; 'twas sweet and yet, 'twas bitter—
Of noble ladies left behind, spoke cavalier and ritter ;
And eyes grew bright, and sighs arose from every iron breast,
For a dear wife, or plighted maid, far in the widowed west.

Towards the knights came Constantine, thrice noble by his birth,
And ten times nobler than his blood, his high out-shining worth,
His step was slow, his lips were moved, though not a word he spoke,
Till a gallant lord of Lombardy his spell of silence broke :
'What aileth thee, O Constantine, that solitude you seek ?
If counsel, or if aid you need, we pray thee do but speak ;
Or dost thou mourn, like other 'frères,' thy lady-love afar
Whose image shineth nightly through yon European star ?'

Then, answered courteous Constantine: 'Good Sir, in simple truth,
I chose a gracious Lady in the hey-day of my youth;
I wear her image on my heart and, when that heart is cold,
The secret may be rifled thence, but never must be told.
For, her I love and worship well by light of morn or even;
I ne'er shall see my Mistress dear, until we meet in heaven;
But this believe, brave cavaliers, there never was but one
Such Lady as my holy love, beneath the blessèd sun.'

He ceased, and passed with solemn step on to an olive grove,
And kneeling there he prayed a prayer to the Lady of his love;
And many a cavalier whose lance has still maintained his own
Beloved to reign without a peer, all earth's unequalled one,
Looked tenderly on Constantine in camp and in the fight;
With wonder and with generous pride they marked the lightning light
Of his fearless sword careering through the unbelievers' ranks,
As angry Rhone sweeps off the vines that thicken on his banks.

'He fears not death come when it will, he longeth for his love,
And fain would find some sudden path to where she dwells above—
How should he fear for dying, when his Mistress dear is dead?'
Thus often of Sir Constantine his watchful comrades said:

Until it chanced from Sion's wall the fatal arrow flew,
That pierced the outworn armour of his faithful bosom through ;
And never was such mourning made for knight in Palestine,
As thy loyal comrades made for thee, belovèd Constantine.

Beneath the royal tent, the bier was guarded night and day,
Where, with a halo round his head, the Christian champion lay ;
That talisman upon his breast—what may that marvel be,
Which kept his ardent soul through life from every error free ?
Approach, behold, nay, worship there the image of his love—
The Heavenly Queen who reigneth all the sacred hosts above ;
Nor wonder, that around his bier there lingers such a light,
For the spotless one that sleepeth, was 'the Blessed Virgin's Knight.'

III. LA ZINGARELLA : FROM THE ITALIAN.

FRANCIS S. MAHONY (FATHER PROUT): 1804–1866.

FROM 'THE RELIQUES OF FATHER PROUT,' 1878.

THERE's a legend that's told of a gipsy who dwelt
In the land where the Pyramids be ;
And her robe was embroidered with stars, and her belt
With devices, right wondrous to see :

And she lived in the days when our Lord was a Child
On his Mother's immaculate breast ;
When he fled from his foes—when to Egypt exiled,
He went down with Saint Joseph the Blest.

This Egyptian held converse with magic, methinks,
And the future was given to her gaze ;
For an obelisk marked her abode, and a sphinx
On her threshold kept vigil always.
She was pensive, and ever alone, nor was seen
In the haunts of the dissolute crowd ;
But communed with the ghosts of the Pharaohs, I ween,
Or with visitors wrapped in a shroud.

And there came an old Man from the desert one day,
With a Maid on a mule, by that road,
And a Child on her bosom reclined—and the way
Led them straight to the gipsy's abode ;
And they seemed to have travelled a wearisome path,
From their home, many, many a league—
From a tyrant's pursuit, from an enemy's wrath—
Spent with toil, and o'ercome with fatigue.

And the gipsy came forth from her dwelling, and prayed
That the pilgrims would rest them awhile ;
And she offered her couch to that delicate Maid
Who had come many, many a mile ;
And she fondled the Babe with affection's caress,
And she begged the old Man would repose ;
'Here the stranger,' she said, 'ever finds free access,
And the wanderer balm for his woes.

Then, her guests from the glare of the noonday she led
To a seat in her grotto so cool,
Where she spread them a banquet of fruits—and a shed,
With a manger, was found for the mule ;

With the wine of the palm-tree, with the dates newly culled
All the toil of the road she beguiled ;
And, with song in a language mysterious she lulled
On her bosom the wayfaring Child.

When the gipsy, anon, in her Ethiop hand
Placed the Infant's diminutive palm,
Oh, 'twas fearful to see how the features she scanned
Of the Babe in his slumber so calm.
Well she noted each mark, and each furrow that crossed
O'er the tracings of destiny's line :
'Whence came ye?' she cried, in astonishment lost,
'For this Child is of lineage divine.'

'From the village of Nazareth,' Joseph replied,
'Where we dwelt in the land of the Jew ;
We have fled from a tyrant, whose garment is dyed
In the gore of the children he slew ;
We were told to remain, till an angel's command
Should appoint us the hour to return ;
But till then, we inhabit the foreigner's land,
And in Egypt we make our sojourn.'

'Then, ye tarry with me,' cried the gipsy in joy,
'And ye make of my dwelling your home ;
Many years have I prayed that the Israelite Boy
(Blessed hope of the Gentiles) would come.'
And she kissed both the feet of the Infant, and knelt,
And adored him at once—then a smile
Lit the face of his Mother, who cheerfully dwelt
With her host on the banks of the Nile.

Birth and Passing of Mary

SIR JOHN CROKER BARROW, BART.

FROM 'MARY OF NAZARETH; A LEGENDARY POEM,' 1889.

I. MARY'S BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD.

At dawn of day, the day of Mary's birth,
There fell a golden cloud upon the earth,
Down-curtained from the Throne of God above
The mystic shadow of his earth-drawn love—
On all the Holy Land, tradition saith,
Between Jerusalem and Nazareth,
Between the temple of the cherubim,
And humble home of Anne and Joachim—
Uniting thus, whilst angels thither trod,
The house of Mary to the house of God.
For, though it seemed to eyes of men a haze
Of sun-mists, gathered in a golden sheen,
Yet was it full of angels, who, unseen
By mortal eye, yet shone beneath the gaze
Of God, resplendent, like the crystal gems
That sparkle in the snow-drift as it lies;
Or like the stars, that fill with diadems
The milk-white arch that spans the purple skies.

The mystic shadow of God-giving love,
It settled, like the Spirit of his Breath,
Now, on the purple vines of Nazareth,
Now, on the crests of Thabor's slopes above;
Whence, drifting down from peak to peak it sank
From vale to vale, to Jordan's river bank;

Where, lighting on the water, like a gleam
Sun-launched, it floated down the sacred stream—
First southwards and towards the dread Dead Sea;
Then westward, to the breast of Olivet;
Last, like a halo of the sun not set,
To Sion's gates, all way from Galilee.

All through that cloud-land, angel-guarded, lay
The path by which the feet of Mary trod,
As childhood grew from babyhood, to pay
Her yearly visit to the shrine of God:
A path by sleepless spirits ever swept;
A path by watchful angels ever kept;
A path to each bright spirit made more sweet
By yearly passing of her pilgrim feet—
As, to and fro, across the sand and sward
She came and went with unseen angel-guard;
And year by year, with Anne and Joachim,
Within the Holy City bowed her head,
Before the altar of the cherubim,
And sacred ark of Ever-living Bread—
First borne by them, then led, then leading them
With humble hands clasped child-like into theirs;
Yet longing to pray, ever there, her prayers,
Nor leave again her loved Jerusalem.

For Mary had been vowed to God by them,
So soon as she should be of riper years,
And to his temple in Jerusalem—
A vow unspoken yet to outward ears,
But hidden in the heart of Joachim,
And treasured up in Anne's maternal breast—
Until, presenting her before their priest,
They spoke their thoughts—her mother thus to him,

'I give to God the gift he gave to me':
Then, after scarce a pause, her father thus,
'We give to God the Child he gave to us,
He wills it; and we will it; let it be.'

And Mary grew in beauty, day by day;
And grew in grace—albeit, full of grace—
In grace and beauty; knowing no decay,
Ingrafted by her soul upon her face.
Like some fair lily, on a water lap,
Which spotless in its baby-bud from first,
Yet, more and more from day to day athirst,
Draws from some unseen source its daily sap;
And daily throws out leaves, new leaves, more full,
Though not more pure, nor yet more beautiful:
So Mary, pure and fair, yet grew apace,
From beauty unto beauty, grace to grace,
From day to day, and daily, from her birth—
Till none was pure, or fair as she on earth.

II. MARY'S DEATH AND PASSING.

THEN, blessing each and all, with hands outspread,
She closed her eyes upon the world beneath,
And, passing through the open gates of death,
To Christ, the King of living and of dead,
Ascended, by the path he once had trod,
To him, enthroned upon the Throne of God.

They light the lamps of death, the while they weep;
They weep their loss—they cannot weep for her;
They weep their loss of Mother-Comforter—
Oh, not for her who seems but one asleep:
They kneel, and kiss once more her hands and feet;
Then, cover them with spices and with myrrh—
Though sweetest scent from such is not so sweet
As that which rises, incense-like, from her.

Then, forth from thence, on flower-o'erladen bier,
They bear away the Mother of their love :
They know her spirit is no longer here,
But gone for ever to her Son above ;
Yet virtue flowed to such as held the faith,
E'en from that lifeless form—tradition saith—
Not power to raise herself, but, power instead
To heal the sick, and raise to life the dead ;
Full power from Heaven the sick and dead to save,
Whilst borne towards the garden of her grave.

Last, lay they her, who bore from virgin womb
The Lord of Life, within a virgin tomb ;
'Neath cypress sad and weeping olive tree
And sighing shadows of Gethsemani ;
And, o'er her shroud of frankincense and myrrh,
Raise flower on flower, around and over her :
Then, closing all the fragrance with a stone,
Keep, day and night, death-watches, one by one.

There, whilst they watch, they hear all angels sing
Triumphant welcomes to their Queen and King—
Such melodies as, from eternal yore,
Had never living being heard before—
Till three days after—so tradition says—
One came who was not witness of her death,
And had not seen her give to God her breath,
Nor thought she would have ended thus her days :
He, Thomas, scarce believing she had died,
His wish once more to see her signified ;
All doubt of death to set at rest thereby,
He scarce believing yet that she could die.

At whose request they roll the stone away—
The flowers lie fresh and fragrant where she lay—

Yet nought but flowers—and voices in the air
From far-off angels—but, she is not there ;
Then knew they, given by God to understand,
As Jesus no corruption saw, that he—
Lest Mary should by death corruption see—
Had raised her body to that spirit-land
Where, high above the nine-fold choirs of heaven,
And high above the great archangel-seven,
He had prepared for her the highest throne
Of all, but that of God, and of his own.

There, as they gaze far into heaven on high,
As who would pierce the blue veil of the sky,
A wondrous vision is vouchsafed to them,
As by the angels of Jerusalem—
They see the glory of the great White Throne
And Jesus claiming Mary for his own,
As worthy to have given him birth alone,
And worthy only to receive that crown—
That crown which he had won for her by death,
And she, by all she suffered here beneath.

Clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet,
Crowned with twelve stars, and throned on mercy-seat—
Crowned, Queen of all the angel-hosts of heaven ;
Crowned, Queen of all the patriarchs of old ;
Crowned, Queen of all the prophets, by God given ;
Crowned, Queen of all apostles of his fold ;
Crowned, Queen of all his martyrs done to death ;
Crowned, Queen of all confessors of his faith ;
Crowned, Queen of all the virgins of his love ;
Crowned, Queen by him of all his saints above—
Doth she, by grace of God, reign now, as then,
The Queen of angels and the Queen of men.

Salernese Hymn to the Virgin

WILLIAM BEATTIE, M.D.: 1793–1875.

FROM THE FIRST EDITION OF 'THE PILGRIM IN ITALY,' 1825.

Ave, Maria, Glory's Queen,
Our Load-star and Defender—
Homage to thee, on shore and sea,
Our grateful spirits render ;
To thee who guid'st the fisher's bark
And lead'st the wildered stranger,
When all behind is drear and dark,
And all before is danger.

With fervent vow to thee we bow,
The Friend that never faileth ;
When storms appear, thou still art near
To succour him that saileth.

Our wives are watching on the shore,
Our children call their fathers ;
They quake to hear the tempest roar,
And tremble as it gathers ;
The leven flashes on our bows—
Yon mountain, rent asunder,
Writhes like a giant in his throes
And weeps in molten thunder.

To thee, to thee we bow the knee—
Our Friend who never faileth,
When tempests sweep the yawning deep,
To succour him that saileth,

No lingering star illumes our path ;
The night scowls drear and drearer ;
But, smiling through the tempest's wrath,
We know that thou art nearer ;
We know our wives and children keep
Their fast before thine altar ;
Thou wilt not leave their eyes to weep,
Their faithful hearts to falter.

To thee, to thee we bow the knee,
Our Friend who never faileth,
When tempests sweep the yawning deep,
To succour him that saileth.

Ave, Maria, glorious Star,
Where midnight horrors muster,
Thou giv'st the moon her silver car,
The sky its holy lustre ;
At thy behest the billows roar,
At thy command they slumber ;
Oh, softly guide our helm ashore
Whom night and storm encumber.

With fervent vow to thee we bow,
The Friend that never faileth,
When tempests sweep the foaming deep,
To succour him that saileth.

NOTE.

Line 18 : Yon mountain ; Mount Vesuvius, in the neighbourhood of Salerno.

Carol, Song, and Romance

I. CAROL OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

FOUND AMONGST THE ROYAL MSS., BRITISH MUSEUM, BY G. R. WOODWARD, M.A.; AND MODERNISED (1892) *BY WILLIAM J. BLEW, M.A.*

FROM 'CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS-TIDE,' SERIES II, 1893.

CHORUS: THIS other night I saw a sight,
A star as bright as day,
And ever among a Maiden sung:
'By by, Baby, lullay.'
This Virgin clear, withouten peer,
Unto her Son 'gan say:

MOTHER: 'My Son, my Lord, my Father dear,
Why liest thou in hay?
Methink be right, that king and knight
Should lie in rich array;
Yet, nevertheless, I will not cess
To sing, By by, lullay.'

This Babe full fain answered again,
And thus, methought, he said:

SON: 'I am a King, above all thing,
In hay if I be laid:
For ye shall see that kingès three
Shall come on twelvè-day;
For this behest give me your breast,
And sing, By, Baby, lullay.'

MOTHER: 'In fay I say, withouten nay,
Thou art my Darling dear;
I shall thee keep while thou dost sleep,
And make thee goodè cheer:

And all thy will I will fulfill,
Thou wottest it well, in fay ;
Yet more than this, I will thee kiss
And sing, By, Baby, lullay.'

SON : 'My Mother sweet, when I have sleep,
Then, take me up at loft
Upon your knee, that ye set me
And handle me full soft :
And in your arm lap me right warm,
And keep a-night a-day ;
And if I weep and cannot sleep,
Sing, By, Baby, lullay.'

MOTHER : 'My Son, my Lord, my Father dear,
Sith all is at thy will,
I pray thee, Son, grant me a boon,
If it be right and skyll,
That child, or man, or may, or can,
Be merry on this day,
To bliss them bring ; and I shall sing,
By by, Baby, lullay.'

SON : 'My Mother sheen, of Heaven Queen,
Your asking shall I speed ;
So that this mirth displease me not
In word, neither in deed ;
Sing what ye will, so that ye fulfill
My ten commandments aye ;
You for to please let them not cease
To sing, Baby, lullay.'

CHORUS : This other night I saw a sight,
A star as bright as day,
And ever among a Maiden sung,
'By by, Baby, lullay.'

II. SONG OF THE TIME OF HENRY VI.

CONTRIBUTED BY A. H. BULLEN.

I SING of a Maiden
That is makeless ;
King of all kings
To her Son she chess.
He came also still,
There his Mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.
He came also still
To his Mother's bower,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.
He came also still,
There his Mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.
Mother and Maiden
Was never none but she ;
Well may such a Lady
God's Mother be.

III. ROMAUNT OF BLESSED JOHANN.

THOMAS P. BULLIVANT.

STRAIGHTWAY I gat me to our Ladyes shrine
For to intreat her grace, who hath full oft
Holpen her servaunt in his hour of need,
And of sore grievous sorrow him hath freed ;
So kind a Ladye is she and so soft,
And doth to misery her heart incline.

'O Ladye, chosen Vessel of the Lord,
Who didst thy God a silly Babe give suck;
O Mother-Maid, more pure than whitest snow,
No stain in thy conceptioun didst thou know;
Thou broughtest to yfallen men good luck,
Whose womb was tabernacle of the Word.

'Lo, now thy servant travaileth right sore,
And all his flesh is weary unto death;
Dark is the sun to him and pleasaunt light;
Dark, what the world of winsome has and bright—
For cold her lips, and hushèd is her breath,
And silent is her tongue for evermore.

'But yestermorn, she baked the wastel-bread,
And chid the idle hound which turned the spit;
But yestere'en, fine woof and rare she spun,
For swaddling bands to wrap the little one;
And in great Goddès sight is now her spirit,
And the little life she brought forth is yfled.

'O Ladye, thou hast felt this worldès teen—
Ladye of Sorrows, thou art yclept of men—
Seven sacred sorrows reft in twain thine heart;
A murtherous sword did work it grievous smart,
When that thy bleeding Son did meet thy ken,
Afresh ensanguined from the lashes keen.

'O Ladye, by the sorrows of thine heart,
And by thy Sonnès sacred woundès five,
Cast down one crumb of comfort, yea, but one,
From thy bright throne above the golden sun;
So that I may not pine away, but thrive,
And have assuagement of mine heartès smart.'

Whereat ywaxèd strong the ruddy flame,
The which had flickered weakly in his bowl:
And sudden was I ware of marvel straunge,
And all my body felt a wondrous chaunge;
The sorrow clean was lifted from my soul,
An unction holy stole thörough my frame.

'Johann, thou hast found favour in mine eyes,
And lo, the Holy Child is gracious eke;
Come, comfort take, and blithesome be thy face,
For thou hast surely found with us great grace;
Thy wife it is not meet for thee to seek—
She hath the vision blest in Paradise.

'For thee, Johann, I have this grace to give,
My very knight to be in chivaulry;
And bruit my fame in sundry landès ferne,
That men of my Conceptïoun may learn,
Therefore, to praise God; and in chastity
Abiding alway, blameless lives to lead.'

Thus spake the Gracious Ladye; and straightway
She buckled on my thigh a mystic sword,
Whose sheath doth bear this high inscriptïoun,
'For Marye, and her pure Conceptïoun':
And in my darkest hour I pray the Lord,
Our Ladyes pure Conceptïoun be my stay.

NOTES.

No. I. Line 11: Cess; Cease. Line 40: Skyll; Reason. No. II. Line 2: Makeless; Matchless. Line 4: Chess; Chose. Lines 5, 9, and 13: Also; As. No. III. Line 8: Silly; Innocent. Line 19: Wastel-bread; A coarse kind of home-made bread. Line 25: Teen; Sorrow. Line 51: Ferne; Distant.

Ode and Legend

EMILY BOWLES.

FROM 'THE MONTH,' 1870; AND 'THE THREE KINGS,' 1874.

I. COMPLINE.

Down drops the red sun in the burnished sea,
Down in rejoicing might
Into the trembling deep:
And while his hot rim slowly vanisheth
As if all drowned in sleep,
Soft swaying o'er the fragrant lea,
The Ave-chime forewarns the night,
And every care and labour banisheth.
'Ave, Maria': so it saith.

Slowly the red herd follows in a line
The sheep-bell fainter falls,
The corncrake's wooden note
Creaks through the green ears, rustling, waving slowly—
Like swaying, wind-tost boat;
Then hallowing the day's decline,
Christ's coming thrice the bell recalls,
And bids us hail the Maiden, great and lowly.
'Ave, Maria': Mother holy.

As sheaves of lilies lift their stately heads
Beside an alley green,
In queen-like, stainless pride,
So the great multitude thy fair head crowneth
The golden throne beside:

Yet violet in the fresh spring meads
Was never meeker, lowlier seen,
Which in the smiling rain the April drowneth.
'Ave, Maria': Gabriel saith.

Thou art the 'mighty Mother' of the Greeks;
Thy womb the earth enfolds;
Thy flesh, the germ of life;
From the mind of God Athenè leaping,
Armed for the deathless strife;
Thou art Demeter, when she seeks
Her child among the doomful holds;
Mother of harvests, sheaves of souls still reaping.
'Ave, Maria': Joying, weeping.

Then dreamt they thee, O bright and moon-crowned Maid,
As Huntress of the wild,
Chastiser of the proud;
Thy light from all base earthly churls concealing,
The false-tongued, loose-lifed crowd;
But in the fresh and hidden shade,
To hearts still undefiled,
Thy heavenly moon-bright face revealing.
'Ave, Maria': Name of healing.

Thou art the Mother of the fallen in fight;
Where their dead bodies lie
Thou keepest watch and ward,
Spreading thy sackcloth, scaring the birds of prey,
In sleepless, loving guard;
True Rispah, mother Israelite,
Thou seest the years go by,
Unfailing still, unknowing of decay.
'Ave, Maria': Maid alway.

Thou too, the Mother of earth's sad and reft,
Widowed and Childless Maid,
Thou by the cross must stand;
E'en when thy risen Lord to heaven ascending,
Not placed at his right hand,
But on the wild hill-side still left,
Thy rest for years delayed,
Still all thy bread with tears of longing blending.
'Ave, Maria': Love unending.

Then, when the red sun quenches in the wave,
And all the earth lies still,
Let us kneel down and pray—
Lifting our praying hands and thankful voices:
'Mother, be thou our stay;
Strength we must plead for; love we crave;
Light for our warped and darkened will—
Until our soul, full-ripe, in heaven rejoices.'
Hear our voices, Mother-Maid.

II. GOSSAMER THREADS: FIL DE LA SAINTE VIERGE.

Lines suggested by a drawing of Mr. Armitage (1869), which illustrated the legendary name of the Gossamer.

RED lay the rustling leaves along the lane,
Ripe chestnuts smote the grass with sullen blows,
From russet oaks rained dropping, fruity cups,
And scarlet berries hung in every brake.
The sun had scarcely risen from earth's rim,
And all the western sky was purple dark,
When, gleaming through the level bars of cloud,

I spied a Lady floating on the air,
In robes of colour flecked with orient pearl.
Most fair, most pure, most wondrous bright was she:
Her hair, like ripening wheat-ears fell adown
Her Virgin-face. Her large eyes, softly fixed,
Showed neither blue, nor brown, so veiled their lids,
So thick their shady fringe of darkened gold.
Her mantle floated like a deeper sky;
Her small hands bore a staff of milk-white wool,
And spun it softly waving to and fro;
Till falling, falling, ever falling down,
The meshy web did cover all the earth,
And weft o'er field and hedgerow, wold and lawn:
Meseemed it bound the world in one wide net
Of love, and silken bond of brotherhood.
The while I gazed, rapt, wondering at this sight,
I saw the heavenly Weaver knit full fast
Her myriad threads with waving, flitting hands,
And knot each mesh, and twine the glistering threads
From every circle in concentric rings,
Till every part she shaped in perfect growth,
And spread the mazy pattern o'er the world.
And while she laboured, like a rhythmic chime
Of far-off bells, came through the air this song:

'Twine the spotless thread
From milk-white staff and hand;
Ne'er shall earth-stained web
Be spun from stainless strand.

'Bathe the twisted thread
Within the crystal sea;
Thence, the woven web
Shall clean and spotless be.

'Weave the air-borne thread,
Mother and Maid in one:
Thus thy fragile web
Shall bind us to God's throne.'

As ceased the song, I faintly, faintlier heard,
As if updrawn, an 'Alleluia' clear,
In voice so sweet that all my sense was drowned.
But, when the silence fell, I looked again;
Then saw the Lady beg, with upraised hands,
A gift of dew from airy mist and cloud,
Earth-born, and stored from earth's own radiate heat,
To scatter grateful moisture on its breast.
This kindly shower she poured upon her web,
Then smiled to see it changed to woven pearl;
And, as she smiled, the iridescent light
Burst forth with dazzling gleam, and smote the woof,
And every pearl became a rainbow gem.

Then many voices 'Alleluia' sang,
Far off and farther through the fields of air,
To him who rides the clouds and stormy winds,
And casts his ice in morsels; giveth snow,
Or hail, to smite; and then, lets drop the dew
In gentle showers of pitying love; and while
He decks the spring and summer with rich joy,
Spreads tender beauty round the dying year,
And failing strength, and loss, and sharpest grief,
And counts each falling hair of wintry life.

On some Loretto-Titles of Our Lady

MATTHEW BRIDGES.

FROM 'HYMNS OF THE HEART,' 1848.

I. TURRIS EBURNEA.

DAUGHTER of David, ever fair,
In all thy gentle power,
Oh, let me find thy gracious care—
An Ivory Tower

Created by the King of kings
To be his own abode—
Beneath the shadow of his wings,
Mother of God.

For this, to thee in each distress
As shelter man may run ;
And through thee, hasten on to bless
Thy glorious Son.

Defend me, then, in thine embrace,
Where safety blends with rest,
To make my paradise of grace
Thy Virgin-breast.

Glory of Women, matchless Maid,
Immaculate, sublime—
When death in lowly dust hath laid
All towers of time,

Thy light impearled in bliss shall glow,
And I will look to thee ;
For thou hast been, in weal and woe,
A Tower of Love to me.

II. FŒDERIS ARCA.

Holy of holies, rend the veil
  Before thy throne of gold ;
Ark of the Covenant, all hail,
  The Virgin we behold :
Bright cherubim and seraphim,
  In one mysterious crowd,
Expand the everlasting hymn
  That rolls from cloud to cloud.

Odours, in folds of fragrant fumes
  Pervade the ravished skies ;
Whilst angels form, with arching plumes,
  A firmament of eyes :
They gaze ; and as they gaze, they shine ;
  And as they shine, admire,
With adoration all divine,
  All love—all life—all fire.

No temple there is made with hands,
  By human priesthood trod ;
Alone the once-slain Victim stands,
  The living Lamb of God :
To him the blessed Mary prays ;
  With him she intercedes ;
The Church, around her, homage pays
  For whom her mercy pleads.

III. JANUA CŒLI.

Gate of immortal Bliss,
  Whose sweet celestial ray
Comes shining o'er the vast abyss
  That severs night from day.

My soul unfurls her wings
To soar aloft to thee—
And far removed from earthly things,
Adores thy Mystery.

The prophet saw that Fane
Of heavenly beauty fair,
Where Deity itself would deign
To find a dwelling there.

One Portal stood alone,
Of peerless pearl its frame ;
There would the Lord ascend his throne—
And Mary was its name.

All hail, thou matchless Maid,
An entrance make for me,
Where he in glory is displayed,
Who came to us through thee.

By all, and more than mothers know,
In their maternal state ;
By all thy vigils, tears and woe,
Thyself immaculate ;

Thou, Virgin-Queen of earth and heaven,
Present me to thy Son—
That every sin may be forgiven,
And a fresh trophy won.

IV. DOMUS AUREA.

Light, light, infinite light—
The mountains melted away ;
Ten thousand thousand seraphim bright
Were lost in a blaze of day :

For God was there, and beneath his feet
A pavement of sapphires glowed,
As the mirrors of glory transcendently meet
To reflect his own abode.

Love, love, infinite love—
The lowly Lady of Grace
Bows, underneath the o'ershadowing Dove,
Her eternal Son to embrace :
For God is there, the Ancient of Days,
An Infant of human years ;
Whilst angels around them incessantly gaze,
And nature is wrapt in tears.

Peace, peace, infinite peace—
A Golden House hath it found,
Whose ineffable beauty must ever increase
With immortality crowned :
For God was there, the Lord of the skies,
Whose loud Alleluias ran
From heaven to earth—as Emmanuel lies
In the arms of Mary, for man.

NOTES.

No. II. Line 12: Firmament of eyes; see Ezechiel i. 18. 'The whole body was full of eyes.' Also, Apoc. iv. 8. No. III. Line 13: One Portal stood alone; see Ezechiel xliv. 2. 'This Gate shall be shut . . . because the Lord hath entered in by it.' No. IV. Line 6: Sapphires; see Exodus xxiv. 10. 'Under his feet as it were a work of sapphire stone.'

King Solomon's Mother, Mary's Power, and other Verse, 1873–1891.

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.

I. KING SOLOMON'S MOTHER.

'Go forth, and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the joy of his heart.' Cant. iii. 11.

Come, see King Solomon: the glorious youth
Is seated on his father's throne, his heart
With joy o'erflowing, and with gratitude
To Bethsabee, his mother, by whose prayer
He wears the diadem of kingly power.
His mother comes, and rising on his throne
He bows in reverence, and the courtiers place
The mother's throne upon her son's right hand.
'One little grace, O King, refuse me not.'
'My mother, ask; for 'tis not meet that I
Should turn away thy face,' her son replies.
Such was the filial reverence of the King.

But come, behold a Monarch greater far
Than Solomon: at Cana's marriage feast
He sits, and words of grace from off his lips
Fall copiously for all; when, in his ear
A gentle whisper sounds, from One whose voice
Had brought him down on earth, whose voice had given
For thirty years the law to all his life.
'My Son, they have no wine,' his Mother says

With thoughtful love for men, with boundless trust
In his almighty power and loving heart.
'What is there, Woman, between me and thee?
Mine hour is not yet come,' her Son replies.
Thus, Jesus seems to turn away her face.

Oh, mystery : 'His hour is not yet come.'
Wait, Mother, wait, until thou see the throne—
That throne of David of which Gabriel told,
The royal cross, whence o'er the hearts of men
Thy Son shall reign in majesty of love.
That is the throne thy prayer did win for him,
When he took flesh within thy virgin womb.
When he shall sit upon that throne of shame
His heart in love exulting, and shall taste
The vinegar with which they mock his thirst,
Then, is his nuptial hour ; then, at his side
Thy throne of dolours shall be placed ; and then,
Shall he confess thy true maternity,
And men shall cry : 'Great Queen of Martyrs, hail.'

'His hour is not yet come' : yet, Mary knows
The hour ne'er came when she could be refused,
And bids the servants wait upon his word.

Oh, wiser thou than Solomon, dear Lord ;
Thy Mother too, more honoured far than his.
For Bethsabee soon hid her face in shame,
When Solomon, indignant at her prayer,
Despite his royal word, swore speedy death
Upon the man whose cause she undertook :
While Jesus, seeming to refuse, does all
And more than all, his Mother's prayer had asked.

II. MARY'S POWER: A DIVINE PARADOX.

'All things obey the commands of God, even the Virgin; and all things obey the commands of the Virgin, even God.' Saint Bernardine.

Well knew that captain, who of old
Bade sun and moon stand still,
That God will hear the bold command
Of an obedient will.

Faith triumphed over God—he served
The servant of his grace;
And still, the word of faith could pluck
The mountain from its base.

Then say not, 'It is blasphemy,'
When Christian hearts grow bold,
And bid God's Mother with her Son
Her Mother's rights uphold.

For Mary's faith did more than move
The mount, or check the sun,
When to her womb the Incarnate God
Her lowly answer won.

God's will she loved; and subject he
To her commands became;
Giving a Mother's rights to one
Who chose the Handmaid's name.

Subject he was, because he reigned
Within his Mother's heart;
And Mary, while her God she ruled,
Played still the Handmaid's part.

So now, the Almighty reigns supreme
O'er Mary's docile will ;
But what he moves her to command,
He scorns not to fulfil.

Or think you, Mary must in heaven
Her earthly power resign ?
And dares not guide that sceptered hand
Which used in hers to twine ?

Nay, jealousy exists not there,
Where human pride has ceased ;
There, Jesus girds his robes divine
And tends his servants' feast.

There, first are last, and last are first ;
God leaves, yet keeps his throne ;
And joys to do the will of those
Who fear to do their own.

God's jealousy is zeal for truth
Which only pride offends ;
His Majesty to lowly souls
Unsullied condescends.

Let men who know their nothingness
On empty pomp rely ;
To stoop is God's prerogative,
The pomp of the Most High.

The humblest Maid e'er knelt on earth
Is Queen in heaven above—
Ruling the universe by right,
And ruling God by love.

III. SHELL-FOSSILS.

By happy choice, within the marble base
Whereon our Lady's altar rests, there lie,
Conspicuous to the kneeling suppliant's eye,
Shell-fossils strange of lost archaic race.

O Lord our God, how wonderful to trace
In ocean's depths, on earth, in circling sky,
Thy hand life-giving to both low and high—
But most to man, crowned with thy heavenly grace.

Above the altar, in the tryptic old,
The Queen of men and angels to her breast
The Infant-God, with tenderest love, has pressed.

Here stands the priest, by faith and hope made bold ;
Here, offers up the Blood of priceless worth—
How wonderful, O God, thy name in all the earth.

IV. REGINA CLERI : A PRIEST'S PRAYER.

Mother of God, in thy surpassing grace
The Christian priest his glorious type may trace ;
His functions study in thy life divine,
And sigh to thee for virtues like to thine.
What holy orders to his soul might be
Was thy conception's sanctity to thee :
A sacramental fount, a living well,
Whence all thy mighty stream of graces fell—
That purest love which in thy lowly womb
Made heaven's great Exile find a royal home—
That thrill of rapturous joy when Jesus pressed
His infant lips upon thy virgin-breast—

That strength to bear thy more than martyr's sword
And murmur still, 'the Handmaid of the Lord.'
Then, Lady, look with pity upon one
Who bears the priestly image of thy Son ;
By whose unworthy hands and trembling breath
The Victim-Priest renews his mystic death—
Whose functions bind him to thy highest care,
While conscience cries, 'Presumptuous man, beware.'
O Glorious Queen, thy lamp was kindled bright
In thy conception : yet, through all the night,
Waiting the King of kings, thy prudent toil
Trimmed and replenished it with purest oil.
My priestly lamp burns dim ; Oh, pray thy Spouse,
Within my sluggish spirit to arouse
The grace the priestly character demands,
Pledged by the pontiff's venerable hands.

V. THE HOLY FAMILY.

Bow down, ye angel hierarchies,
And see, how human charities
Diviner bonds on earth can tie,
Than those which your bright ranks ally.

Ye, whose immortal being's flame
Full-kindled from the Eternal came,
Behold, the world's Creator rest—
A Babe upon a Mother's breast.

And while your eyes enraptured see
The Equal, Undivided Three,
Learn from that vision to admire
God subject to an earthly sire.

Ye know no parents, child, nor bride ;
No homes your love with God divide ;
Yet, angel-lips may humbly bless
This Virgin-Mother's fruitfulness :

And angel-hearts may glow with pride
To minister at Joseph's side,
Who knows no earthly cares but these—
God's Mother and her Son to please.

Now heaven and earth are reconciled
Around the crib of Mary's Child ;
And flesh and blood shall emulate
The glories of the angelic state :

While those whom marriage-bonds unite
The Virgin-spouses shall invite,
To win from Jesus by their prayers,
A blessing on their household cares.

VI. TWO MAGNIFICATS.

'He that is Great hath done great things for me'—
So sang our Lady ; so, the Pharisee :
But she, blest Singer, tells of mercy poured
From age to age on all who fear the Lord ;
While he girds scornfully at all 'the rest'
And flouts yon sinner smiting on his breast.
What wonder then—though Pharisees may rail—
'The rest of men' should bid our Lady 'Hail' ;
Should call her Queen of Mercy, trust her prayers,
And feel that all her blessedness is theirs.

The Virgin Mary to the Child Jesus

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING:
1809–1875.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1850.

SLEEP, sleep, mine Holy One,
My flesh, my Lord—what name? I do not know
A name that seemeth not too high, or low,
Too far from me, or heaven:
My Jesus, that is best—that word being given
By the majestic angel whose command
Was softly, as a man's beseeching, said,
When I and all the earth appeared to stand
In the great overflow
Of light celestial from his wings and head.
Sleep, sleep, my saving One.

And art thou come for saving, baby-browed
And speechless Being—art thou come for saving?
The palm that grows beside our door is bowed
By treadings of the low wind from the south,
A restless shadow through the chamber waving:
Upon its bough a bird sings in the sun;
But thou, with that close slumber on thy mouth,
Dost seem of wind and sun already weary.
Art thou come for saving, O my weary One?

Perchance this sleep, that shutteth out the dreary
Earth-sounds and motions, opens on thy soul
High dreams on fire with God;

High songs that make the pathways where they roll
More bright than stars do theirs ; and visions new
Of thine Eternal Nature's old abode.
Suffer this Mother's kiss,
Best thing that earthly is,
To glide the music and the glory through,
Nor narrow in thy dream the broad upliftings
Of any seraph wing.
Thus, noiseless, thus. Sleep, sleep, my dreaming One.

The slumber of his lips meseems to run
Through my lips to mine heart, to all its shiftings
Of sensual life, bringing contrariousness
In a great calm. I feel I could lie down,
As Moses did, and die—and then live most.
I am 'ware of you, heavenly presences,
That stand with your peculiar light unlost,
Each forehead with a high thought for a crown,
Unsunned in the sunshine. I am 'ware. Ye throw
No shade against the wall. How motionless
Ye round me with your living statuary,
While, through your whiteness, in and outwardly,
Continual thoughts of God appear to go,
Like light's soul in itself. I bear, I bear
To look upon the dropt lids of your eyes,
Though their external shining testifies
To that beatitude, within which were
Enough to blast an eagle at his sun :
I fall not on my sad clay face before ye—
I look on his. I know
My spirit, which dilateth with the woe
Of his mortality,
May well contain your glory.
Yea, drop your lids more low.
Ye are but fellow-worshippers with me.
Sleep, sleep, my worshipped One.

We sate among the stalls at Bethlehem ;
The dumb kine from their fodder turning them,
Softened their hornèd faces
To almost human gazes
Toward the Newly-born :
The simple shepherds from the star-lit brooks
Brought visionary looks,
As yet, in their astonied hearing, rung
The strange sweet angel-tongue :
The Magi of the east, in sandals worn,
Knelt reverent, sweeping round,
With long pale beards, their gifts upon the ground,
The incense, myrrh and gold
These baby-hands were impotent to hold :
So, let all earthlies and celestials wait
Upon thy royal state.
Sleep, sleep, my kingly One.

I am not proud—meek angels, ye invest
New meeknesses to hear such utterance rest
On mortal lips—'I am not proud'—not proud :
Albeit, in my flesh God sent his Son ;
Albeit, over him my head is bowed
As others bow before him ; still, mine heart
Bows lower than their knees.

* * *

I often wandered forth, more child than maiden,
Among the midnight hills of Galilee
Whose summits looked heaven-laden,
Listening to silence, as it seemed to be
God's voice, so soft yet strong, so fain to press
Upon my heart, as heaven did on the height,
And waken up its shadows by a light,

And show its vileness by a holiness.
Then, I knelt down most silent like the night
Too self-renounced for fears,
Raising my small face to the boundless blue
Whose stars did mix and tremble in my tears :
God heard them falling after, with his dew.

* * *

Ah, King ; ah, Christ ; ah, Son :
Sleep, sleep, my kingly One.

Art thou a King, then? Come, his universe,
Come, crown me him a King.
Pluck rays from all such stars as never fling
Their light where fell a curse,
And make a crowning for this kingly brow.
Each empyreal star
Sits in a sphere afar
In shining ambuscade :
The child-brow, crowned by none
Keeps its unchildlike shade.
Sleep, sleep, my crownless One.

Unchildlike shade. No other babe doth wear
An aspect very sorrowful, as thou.
No small babe-smiles my watching heart has seen
To float like speech, the speechless lips between ;
No dovelike cooing in the golden air ;
No quick short joys of leaping babyhood :
Alas, our earthly good
In heaven thought evil, seems too good for thee :
Yet, sleep, my weary One.

And then, the drear sharp tongue of prophecy,
With the dread sense of things which shall be done,

Doth smite me inly, like a sword : a sword?
That, 'smites the Shepherd.' Then, I think aloud
The words 'despised,' 'rejected'—every word
Recoiling into darkness, as I view
The Darling on my knee.
Bright angels, move not—lest ye stir the cloud
Betwixt my soul and his futurity.
I must not die, with Mother's work to do,
And could not live—and see.

It is enough to bear
This Image still and fair ;
This Holier in sleep
Than a saint at prayer ;
This aspect of a Child
Who never sinned, or smiled ;
This Presence in an Infant's face ;
This Sadness most like love,
This Love than love more deep,
This Weakness like omnipotence—
It is so strong to move.
Awful is this watching place ;
Awful, what I see from hence—
A King, without regalia,
A God, without the thunder,
A Child, without the heart for play ;
Aye, a Creator, rent asunder
From his first glory, and cast away
On his own world—for me alone
To hold in hands created, crying, 'Son.'

That tear fell not on thee,
Beloved ; yet, thou stirrest in thy slumber.
Thou, stirring not for glad sounds out of number

Which, through the vibratory palm-trees, run
From summer-wind and bird,
So quickly hast thou heard
A tear fall silently?
Wak'st thou, O loving One?

NOTES.

Line 37: As Moses did, and die; It is a Jewish tradition, that Moses died of the kisses of God's lips. (Author.) Line 118: No small babe-smiles; and Line 141: Who never smiled; A thought which can be traced to Saint Chrysostom, who defends the tradition. (Editor.)

Four Sonnets from the Portuguese

LOUIS DE CAMOENS: 1524–1580.

TRANSLATED BY J. J. AUBERTIN.

I. SONNET CXCVII.: CONCEPTIO B. V. M.

To truly love the Being he created,
Thee, sacred Phœnix, God pure Virgin made;
Behold, what creature thus must be displayed,
E'en to the Maker's own self consecrated:
Thee, in his lofty thought, he separated
First from the first; and their creation stayed,
That all alone thou mightest be arrayed,
By him for so long ages contemplated.

I know not if in any words, my own,
I may express those shining qualities
Which he, whom thou didst make, in thee made known—
Mother, Spouse, Daughter, thou: if thou alone
Shone one in three such lofty dignities,
'Twas that thou didst so please the Three in One.

II. SONNET CXCVIII. : THE INCARNATION.

From heaven immense descendeth God benign,
Made flesh within the Holy Virgin's womb ;
Why stoops Divine thus human to assume ?
The human to exalt to the Divine.
Then, why so poor ? in form so infantine ?
Of tyrant hand submitting to the doom ;
To suffer death inhuman he is come,
Of Adam's senseless sin to pay the fine.

Is 't possible, the fruit they ate, these twain,
Which he who gave it solemnly forbade ?
Aye ; for to be e'en very gods they scan.
And, for this motive was he human made ?
Aye ; the decree went forth, with reason weighed,
That if Man God would be, God must be Man.

III. SONNET CCXL. : CONCEPTIO B. V. M.

Breaks forth the beauteous morning, early glow,
Which brought the great news of the brilliant day ;
Oh, clothe yourselves, ye hearts, in joy's array,
The Messenger of Life with reverence know :
Redemption's Mean is born to man below ;
Thou Monarchy Divine, thy joy display ;
Soon shall earth's company the call obey,
And thou from heaven behold our festive show.

At work so great stands Nature in suspense,
The infernal realm is all confused in fear,
Beholding her new-born without offence :
The general law eternal doth appear :
But, the law's Lord kept pure the innocence
Of his Maternal Sanctuary here.

IV. SONNET CCL.: TO OUR LADY OF MARTYRS.

In cities, forests, woods and the retreat
Of valleys, and on mountains, in their lays
May music-shepherds ever sing thy praise,
At cool of morn and noonday's ardent heat:
And in this temple, where thy favours greet
All pilgrims, shown according to thy ways,
With psalms and hymns and various flowers' displays
All shall thy feasts for ever celebrate.

Some offer votive feet; hands others bear;
By more, upon thy altars hanging be
Sea-monsters, and the captive's prison chain:
But I, delusions, cares, affections vain,
Far greater monsters—these I leave with thee,
And thousand thoughts, all ending in despair.

NOTES.

No. I. Lines 5 and 6: Separated first from the first; Literally, 'formed first before the first.' Line 8 explains the poet's meaning. Compare Ecclus. xxiv. 14. 'From the beginning, and before the world, was I created; and unto the world to come I shall not cease to be'; also, Proverbs viii. 22: words which the Church applies in the Mass to the Blessed Virgin Mary. No. III. Line 12: General law; The law touching the doctrine of original sin. (Editor.)

Hymns from the Paris Breviary

JEAN BAPTISTE DE SANTEUIL: 1630–1697.

TRANSLATED (1849) *BY ROBERT CAMPBELL, OF SKERRINGTON:* 1814–1868.

I. FOR THE ANNUNCIATION.

1. *Hæc illa solemnis dies.*

Oh, joyful was the morn
That told of peace and love
To man, the ruined and forlorn,
Descending from above.

Though far from Eden's bowers,
By sad transgression driven,
A lovelier Eden shall be ours—
For Christ came down from heaven.

From God's eternal breast
He stooped to time and space,
And found with thee, O Maiden blest,
His lowly dwelling place.

And lowlier, in the tomb,
He scornèd not to lie,
That our frail mortal might assume
His immortality.

Praise to the Virgin-born ;
Praise to the Father be,
Through endless life's unwaning morn ;
And Holy Ghost, to thee.

II. *Cœlestis ales nuntiat.*

An angel from beyond the clouds
The awful mystery unshrouds,
Announcing that the time hath come,
And God doth fill the Virgin's womb.

Oh, blest above all power to tell
Is she in whom the Lord doth dwell,
Who, bearing such an heavenly load,
Becomes the Mother of our God.

A Virgin pure she needs must be
To give that flesh from all sin free ;
And, with the Holy Ghost combined,
To form the Saviour of mankind.

The world's Creator, for our sakes,
From Mary's breast his nurture takes ;
That he, who is the angels' food,
May feed us with his Flesh and Blood.

All praise to him who came to die
That we might live eternally ;
Praise to the Father ; and to thee,
Blest Spirit, praise co-equal be.

II. FOR THE PURIFICATION.

I. *Stupete, gentes, fit Deus hostia.*

Ye wondering nations, see
The Ruler of the skies,
Oh, most amazing mystery,
His people's Sacrifice.

The Law's own Lord obeys
The ordinance he gave ;
A price is paid for him who pays
A price the world to save.

And she, the spotless Maid,
Performs the stern command ;
The Shrine of God—and yet, afraid
Within his courts to stand.

An aged saint appears
His humble gift to bring,
And gives his few remaining years
To join the offering.

O Maid, what anguish fierce
Remaineth yet for thee,
Whose tender heart the sword shall pierce,
Beside the dreadful tree—

Where thou, whose Infant cries
Foretell thy future woe,
Shalt die, the perfect Sacrifice,
Redeeming all below.

Then, let us love thee well,
And praise thee evermore ;
Let all the Father's praises tell ;
The Holy Ghost adore.

II. *Templi sacratas pande, Sion, fores.*

O Sion, ope thy temple-gates ;
See, Christ, the Priest and Victim, waits—
Let lifeless shadows flee :
No more to heaven shall vainly rise
The ancient rites—a sacrifice
All pure and perfect, see.

Behold, the Maiden knowing well
The hidden Godhead that doth dwell
In him her infant Son :

And with her Infant, see her bring
The doves, the humble offering
For Christ, the Holy One.

Here, all who for his coming sighed
Behold him, and are satisfied—
Their faith the prize hath won :
While Mary, in her breast conceals
The holy joys her Lord reveals,
And ponders them alone.

Come, let us tune our hearts to sing
The glory of our God and King,
The blessed One and Three :
Be everlasting praise and love
To him who reigns in heaven above,
Through all eternity.

Drama Angelicum

EDWARD CASWALL, OF THE ORATORY, M.A.: 1814-1878.

FROM 'A MASQUE OF ANGELS BEFORE OUR LADY IN THE TEMPLE,' IN 'HYMNS AND POEMS,' 1868.

I. ANGELS' BIRTHDAY SONG TO MARY.

Hail, to the Flower of Grace Divine ;
Heiress, hail, of David's line ;
Hail, Redemption's Heroine.

Hail, to the Virgin pre-elect ;
Hail, to the Work without defect
Of the supernal Architect.

Hail, to her ordained of old,
Deep in eternities untold,
Ere the blue waves of ocean rolled ;

Ere the primordial founts had sprung;
Ere in ether the globe was hung ;
Ere the morning stars had sung.

Welcome, the beatific morn
When the Mother of Life was born,
Whom all lovely gifts adorn.

What a thrill of ecstatic mirth
Danced along through heaven and earth,
At the tidings of Mary's birth.

How was hell to its centre stirred ;
How sang hades, when it heard
Of her coming so long deferred.

Happy, happy, the angel-band,
Chosen by Mary's side to stand,
As her defence on either hand.

Safe beneath our viewless wings,
Mother-elect of the King of kings,
Fear no harm from hurtful things.

What though Eden vanished be,
More than Eden we find in thee—
Thou, our Joy and Jubilee.

II. CHORUS OF PRIESTS AND VIRGINS.

PRIESTS.

On Sion's hill a Temple stands,
No toilsome work of human hands ;
A Temple beauteous in design,
Replete with mysteries divine ;
A Temple of eternal fame—
And Mary is its mystic name.

VIRGINS.

Or ere the skyey dome was reared,
Or ere the mountain-tops appeared,
Or ere the raging sea was chained,
The Lord this Temple had ordained ;
And its secure foundations laid
Before the seraphim were made.

PRIESTS.

Deep in his counsels all divine,
In silence grew the lovely Shrine ;
In silence reared aloft its head,
And like the fragrant cedar spread,
That keeps from age to age its throne
Upon the heights of Lebanon.

VIRGINS.

What in the night of times gone by
Was ever in the eternal Eye,
Now, in the world's reviving morn,
Begins on human sight to dawn ;
Our hands have touched, our eyes behold,
This Temple of pellucid gold.

PRIESTS.

Still, with the tide of onward time
Expanding in a growth sublime,
Soon shall its heritage extend
Throughout the world from end to end,
And gather into one embrace
The Jewish and the Gentile race.

VIRGINS.

Hail, sacrosanct intact Abode
Created for Incarnate God ;
Hail, Shrine incomprehensible,

In which the Father's Word shall dwell ;
Hail, Virgin, free from Adam's curse ;
Hail, Temple of the universe.

PRIESTS.

Ah, could we but a moment spy,
Thy glorious inner sanctuary,
What miracles would meet our gaze,
Exceeding all that earth displays—
Such as befit the Palace bright
Preparing for the Infinite.

VIRGINS.

Ah, could we view the altar fair,
That glistens so divinely there ;
Could we but scent the incense sweet
That hovers round that mercy-seat ;
Could we but hear the lovely song,
Which evermore those aisles prolong—

PRIESTS AND VIRGINS TOGETHER.

Then, should we all perforce avow
That heaven itself had come below ;
In order that the Lord of Grace
Might find on earth a fitting place
Whence—in depths of ruin hurled—
To re-organise the world.

III. MARY'S SONG.

WHILE I was yet a little one
I pleased the Lord of Grace ;
And in his holy sanctuary
He granted me a place.

There, sheltered by his tender care,
And by his love inspired,
I strove in all things to fulfil
Whatever he desired.

I wholly gave myself to him,
To be for ever his ;
I meditated on his law
And ancient promises.

And oft at my embroidery,
Musing upon the Maid
Of whom Messias should be born—
Thus in my heart I prayed :

'Permit me, Lord, one day to see
That Virgin ever dear,
Predestinated in the courts
Of Sion to appear.

'Oh, blest estate, if but I might
Among her handmaids be :
But such a favour, O my God,
Is far too high for me.'

Thus unto God I poured my prayer ;
And he that prayer fulfilled,
Not, as my poverty had hoped,
But, as his bounty willed.

Erewhile, a trembling child of dust,
Now robed in heavenly rays,
I reign, the Mother of my God,
Through sempiternal days :

To me the nations of the world
Their grateful tribute bring ;
To me the powers of darkness bend ;
To me the angels sing.

Chaucer's 'A. B. C.'

PRIERE DE NOSTRE DAME.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER: 1340–1400.

MODERNISED (1892) *BY WILLIAM J. BLEW, M.A.*

A tradition is current 'that the "A. B. C." was written at the request of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster, as a prayer (which is acrostical, like Psalm cxviii. and the Lamentations) for her private use, she being a woman in her religion very devout.' (Speght.)

All-potent Queen, whose mercies never cease,
From whom the world seeks at its darkest hour
For balm in sorrow, and from sin release;
Virgin all-glorious, of all flowers the Flower,
To thee, when clouds of error round me lower,
I flee—thou Quintessence of Courtesie;
Lest, in my perilous languor, by his power
My cruel adversary vanquish me.

Bounty doth hold thine heart so strong in hand,
That well I wot thou wilt my succour be,
Nor canst the prayer of good-intent withstand
That asks thine help—thine heart is aye so free:
Largess art thou of full felicitie,
Haven and Refuge for the tempest-driven;
Lo, how the arch-thieves seven are chasing me;
Help, Lady bright, ere that my ship be riven.

Comfort is none, but in you, Lady dear,
For lo, my sin and my confusion,
Which in thy presence ought not to appear,
Such hold have taken, and so driven me on
As one all-wretchless, desperate and undone,
That, seeing what my sinfulness hath been,
They well may hold that I my doom have won
From you, if mercy fail me, blissful Queen.

Doubt is there none, O Queen of Mercy mild,
That thou art cause of grace and mercy here ;
So God vouchsafe him to be reconciled
To us through thee, Christ's blissful Mother dear.
Were now the bow, with arm and eye severe,
Bent as at first, in justice and in ire,
The righteous God would of no mercy hear ;
But we, through thee, have grace as we desire.

Ever hath been mine hope of rest in thee,
For heretofore full oft, in many a wise,
Unto thy mercy thou hast taken me.
But mercy, Lady, at the Great Assize,
When we shall come before the Judge's eyes,
So little fruit shall then in me be found,
That, but thou ere that day my Schooler be,
Of very right my work will me confound.

Flying, I flee for succour to thy tent,
To hide me from the tempest full of dread,
Beseeching thee to ne'er thyself absent,
Though I be wicked. Help me at this need,
Albeit a beast I be in wit and deed,
Yet, Lady, me encompass with thy grace :
Thine enemy and mine, Lady, take heed,
Unto my death is purposed me to chase.

Gracious Maid, gracious Mother, thou who never
Wast bitter, nor in the earth, nor in the sea ;
But, full of sweetness and of mercy ever,
Help that my Father be not wroth with me ;
Speak thou to him whose face I dare not see ;
So have I done on earth, alas the while,
That, if thou wilt no wise my succour be,
To pit eterne he will my ghost exile.

Him tell, that he vouchsafed in his great will
Man to become, to bring man near to God ;
And on the cross he wrote that blissful bill
Of all acquittance, with his precious Blood,
To penitents a very certitude ;
Pray, therefore, Lady bright, for us alway :
So shalt thou palsy his grim hardihood,
And foil our foe, and fail him of his prey.

I wot well thou wilt succour us when we call,
So much of bounty doth thine heart contain ;
For, when a soul shall into error fall,
Thy pity hastes and hales him back again,
Making his peace with his dread Sovereign,
And bringing him out of the crooked street ;
Whoso thee loveth shall not love in vain,
That shall he find when life and death do meet.

Kalendars lettered with bright red be they
That in this world are lighted with thy name,
And whoso walks with thee in the right way,
He in his soul shall dread not to walk lame ;
Now, Queen of Comfort, since thou art the same
To whom I seek for my soul's medicine,
Let not my foe—no more—my wounds inflame ;
Into thine hands my healing I resign.

Lady, thy sorrow can I not pourtray
Under that cross, nor his great sufferance ;
But, for the pains ye both endured, I pray
Let not our foe, the foe of all (mischance
Betide him) in his lustful arrogance
Boast over that which ye have bought so dear ;
As erst I said, our Stay and Ground of stance,
Still keep on us thy pitying eye and clear.

Moses, that saw the red flame wrap the wood,
The Burning Bush, whose never a brand was brent,
Was sign of thine unspotted Maidenhood ;
Thou art the Bush, whereon he made descent—
The Holy Ghost—to Moses' wonderment,
Burning not burnt—pure figure of the pure :
Help, Lady, help, that hell on us ne'er vent
The flame that shall eternally endure.

Noble Princess, that never hadst a peer,
Certes, in us if any comfort be
Of thee that cometh, Christ's own Mother dear,
We have none other melody, nor glee,
Us to rejoice in our adversity ;
Nor advocate that will and dare so pray
For us, and that too for so small a fee—
Ave-Mary—one, or two, as hap it may.

O very Light of eyes that be stark blind ;
O very Love of labour and distress ;
O Treasurer of bounty to mankind
Whom, to his Mother for her humbleness,
God chose, from Handmaid making Misteresse
Of heaven and earth, our tale of prayer to speed ;
This world doth ever wait for thee to bless,
Since thou dost never fail a man at need.

Purpose have I some time to ask and hear,
Wherefore and why the Holy Ghost thee sought
When Gabriel's voice came greeting to thine ear
Not for our worry he such wonder wrought,
But for to save the sheep that he had bought :
Then needeth us no weapon us to save,
But only, that we did not, as we ought,
Do penitence, and mercy ask and have.

Queen of all Comfort, right well when I think
That I stand guilty before him and thee,
And that my soul is worthy but to sink ;
Ah, caitiff I ; ah, whither shall I flee ?
Unto thy Son, who shall my Pleader be,
Who but thyself—who art sweet Pity's Well ?
More ruth hast thou on our adversity,
Than hath this world a living tongue to tell.

Redress me, Mother ; me, thy child, chastise ;
For certainly, my Father's chastening
Abide I dare not—not in any wise—
So terrible is his full reckoning :
Mother, from whom our joys began to spring,
Be ye my Judge, be ye my sick soul's Leech ;
For, ever in you is pity freshening,
To all that will for pity you beseech.

Sooth is—without thee the good God will grant
Forgiveness none ; but of his graciousness,
With thee his mercies are not slack, nor scant ;
Thee hath he made his Vicaire, and no less
Than Vice-reine of the world, and Governess
Of heaven—in proof, that in thy will it lies
The sharp edge of his justice to repress ;
Thee hath he crownèd in such royal-wise.

Temple devout, God's chosen Sojourning,
Whereof these misbeliefed deprivèd be,
To you my soul in penitence I bring ;
Receive me—for no further can I flee,
Choked, Heavenly Queen, with thorns that poison me,
For which the earth was cursèd to its core ;
I am so wounded, as you well may see,
That well-nigh lost am I, the smart so sore.

Virgin apparelled, as Heaven's noble Bride,
That leadest us unto the highest tower
Of Paradise, my Counsel be and Guide ;
So be my succour, and thy grace my dower :
Ah, in mire have I wandered till this hour ;
Lady, adjourn me to that bower and bourne,
That titled is thy Bank of Freshest Flower,
Where peace and mercy ever shall sojourn.

Xrist, thy dear Son, on earth alighting, here
Bare, on the cross, that death his passion crown ;
Bare, that blind Longeus his full Heart should spear
And make his Heart's Blood run in torrents down :
And this, all this, for my salvation—
And I, so hard to him and false of mind ;
And yet, he will not my damnation—
For this I thank thee, Succour of mankind.

Ysaac was of his death a figure plain,
That so far forth his father would obey,
Albeit, he had wrought nothing to be slain ;
So, lamb-like, went thy Son to death that day :
Now, Lady, full of mercy, thee I pray,
Since me his mercy hath so sure annealed,
Be ye not scant for all we sing, or say,
'Twixt us and wrath to stand our Targe and Shield.

Zachària calleth thee the Open Well,
Wherein the sinful soul is washed from guilt ;
Therefore, this lesson shall my tongue forth tell,
Save for thy tender heart this stream were spilt :
Now, Lady bright, since thou both canst and wilt,
Be merciful to Adam's errant seed,
And bring us to that palace that is built
For penitents, that are penitents indeed.

'Spiritual Sonnets to the Honour of God and his Saints'

HENRY CONSTABLE: 1562–1613.

TO OUR BLESSED LADY.

I

In that, O Queen of queens, thy birth was free
From guilt, which others do of grace bereave,
When, in their mother's womb, they life receive,
God, as his sole-borne Daughter, lovèd thee:
To match thee like thy birth's nobility,
He thee his Spirit for thy Spouse did leave,
Of whom thou didst his only Son conceive;
And so was linked to all the Trinity.
Cease, then, O queens, who earthly crowns do wear,
To glory in the pomp of worldly things:
If men such high respect unto you bear
Which daughters, wives and mothers are of kings;
What honour should unto that Queen be done
Who had your God for Father, Spouse and Son?

II

Sovereign of Queens, if vain ambition move
My heart to seek an earthly prince's grace,
Show me thy Son in his imperial place,
Whose servants reign our kings and queens above:
And, if alluring passions I do prove
By pleasing sighs—show me thy lovely face,
Whose beams the angels' beauty do deface,
And even inflame the seraphins with love.
So by ambition I shall humble be,
When, in the presence of the highest King,
I serve all his, that he may honour me;

And love, my heart to chaste desires shall bring,
When fairest Queen looks on me from her throne,
And jealous, bids me love but her alone.

III

Why should I any love, O Queen, but thee,
If favour past a thankful love should breed?
Thy womb did bear, thy breast my Saviour feed,
And thou didst never cease to succour me.
If love do follow worth and dignity,
Thou all in thy perfections dost exceed;
If love be led by hope of future meed,
What pleasure more than thee in heaven to see?
An earthly sight doth only please the eye,
And breeds desire, but doth not satisfy:
Thy sight gives us possession of all joy;
And with such full delights each sense shall fill,
As heart shall wish but for to see thee still,
And ever seeing, ever shall enjoy.

IV

Sweet Queen, although thy beauty raise up me
From sight of baser beauties here below,
Yet, let me not rest there; but, higher go
To him, who took his shape from God and thee.
And if thy form in him more fair I see,
What pleasure from his deity shall flow,
By whose fair beams his beauty shineth so,
When I shall it behold eternally?
Then, shall my love of pleasure have his fill,
When beauty's self, in whom all pleasure is,
Shall my enamoured soul embrace and kiss,
And shall new loves and new delights distill,
Which from my soul shall gush into my heart,
And through my body flow to every part.

Contemporary Lyrics and Sonnets, &c.

Lyrics

I. OUR LADY OF THE SNOW.

The world is very foul and dark,
And sin has marred its outline fair;
But we are taught to look above,
And see another image there:
And I will raise mine eyes above,
Above a world of sin and woe,
Where sinless, griefless, near her Son,
Sits Mary on a throne of snow.

Mankind seems very foul and dark
In some lights that we see them in;
Lo, as the tide of life goes by,
How many thousands live in sin:
But I will raise mine eyes above,
Above the world's unthinking flow,
To where so human, yet so fair,
Sits Mary on her throne of snow.

My heart is very foul and dark;
Yes, strangely foul sometimes to me
Glare up the images of sin,
My tempter loves to make me see:
Then may I lift mine eyes above,
Above these passions vile and low
To where, in pleading contrast bright,
Sits Mary on her throne of snow.

And oft that throne, so near our Lord's,
To earth some of its radiance lends;

And Christians learn from her to shun
The path impure, that hell-ward tends:
For they have learnt to look above,
Above the prizes here below,
To where, crowned with a starry crown,
Sits Mary on her throne of snow.

Blest be the whiteness of her throne
That shines so purely, grandly there,
With such a passing glory bright,
Where all is bright and all is fair:
God, make me lift mine eyes above,
And love its holy radiance so,
That, some day, I may come where still
Sits Mary on her throne of snow.

II. MONTH OF MAY.

C. M. BRAME.

FROM 'THE LAMP,' 1871.

Blooming flowers and singing birds
Hail the month of May;
The springing leaves and sunshine
Fairest tribute pay:
Every little bright-winged bird
Its sweet story sings;
Every flower and blossom gay
Richest perfume flings:
And every leaf upon the trees,
Every dewdrop fair,
Every whisper, hushed and still,
Of sweet summer air,
Tells the same soft pleading story,
To Mary, Full of grace—
How her children, so far from her,
Long to see her face.

III. MARY KEPT ALL THESE WORDS.

LADY GEORGIANA C. FULLERTON: 1812–1885.

FROM 'THE GOLD-DIGGER'S STORY,' 1872.

MOTHER of him who neither strove, nor cried;
Who 'looked' his pain, when by a friend denied;
Whose whisper from the cross to one forgiven,
Cancelled the past and sent a saint to heaven;
Whose voice was in the noisy streets unknown,
His passage, by his mercies marked alone—
Mother, whose heart was e'en on earth a shrine
For holy memories and thoughts divine,
Whence hymns of praise and adoration rose,
As from a crystal fount the pure stream flows;
Or, the white speechless lilies of the field
The fragrant tribute of their perfume yield—
Mother, perchance for that dear likeness fell
A glance divine upon the flowery dell,
And Jesus praised the children of the sod
For love of thee, the fairest work of God;
For, Solomon in all his glory bore
No brighter aspect than these emblems wore—
Mother, we fain would learn of thee to stand
The cross beside, and with no feeble hand
To clasp its form, and resolutely pray
For strength to bear the burden of the day;
To meditate alone, nor speak of all
The hopes that stir, the terrors that appal
Our secret souls, as in their inmost cells
The storm careers, or the bright sunshine dwells.
Teach us that solemn silence of the heart,
E'en while we fill with zeal life's earnest part,

With footsteps swift to hurry on the way
Wherever love and duty sheds its ray;
But, from the earth we tread to raise our eyes
With calm repose to the unchanging skies.

IV. MADONNA.

HENRY PATMORE: 1861–1883.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1884.

MADONNA, Lady, whom with heavenly fear
I love—so children do their mother dear—
Oh, hear my prayer; my Lady, often stand
As now, not far, where shadows show your hand.
Your face I do not see: I see the night
Assumes your shape and shows your hand for white,
And sweetly know how, on your other side,
Another just as softly hangs allied.

V. A DREAM OF PARADISE.

HELEN MONTAGU STUART: 1829–1891.

FROM 'LYRICS OF LIGHT AND LIFE,' 1874.

IN the mystic realm of slumber, in the quiet land of rest,
Came to me a radiant vision of the country of the blest;
Angels, through the silvery moonbeams, gliding swiftly from the skies,
Brought to me from Eden's garden that fair Dream of Paradise.
Foremost in a long procession, in her shining raiment drest,
Came the One, who, through all ages, bears a name for ever blest;

Queen of Heaven, spotless Lily, walking in resplendent light
Which no mortal eyes can fathom, in the boundless infinite;
Blessed Lady, Mother glorious, dare I hope to see thy face
In the land where none can enter, save through the redeeming grace
Of the cross, which gives us access into the most Holy Place?

Those who in her steps had trodden, followed her in robes of white;
Palms within their hands were waving, they were crowned with gems of light.

They were there, the martyr maidens, who had conquered in the strife;
They were there, the meek and patient, who had borne the cross through life;
Ransomed from earth's tribulation—safe for ever in the fold;
Passing 'neath the pearly gateway—walking in the streets of gold;
And I heard their thrilling anthem floating o'er the crystal sea,
'Unto him who hath redeemed us, glory, praise and honour be.'
But the dazzling vision faded—it was far too bright to stay;
In the rosy tints of dawning vanished the celestial ray:
Earthly chains are still around us, mortal prayers we still must pray,
Pilgrims in the land of exile—waiting till the perfect day
Breaks upon the distant mountains, and the shadows flee away.

Sonnets

I. SWITZERLAND: THE MADONNA'S FESTIVAL.

H. F. APLIN.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1891.

No incense from the altar of this lake;
From choral birds no song. White mists to-day
In mute procession wind their ghostly way
Towards shrines, ice-aisled, remote from human wake,
By granite buttressed, domed with snows opaque.
Stern worship there. Scant space for festal lay
Where chants the avalanche, where tempests pray.
Far off, on shores Italian, sunbeams make
A fane for their Madonna—purple vines
Lay fruitage at her feet—and golden air
Is vocal with her praise, whose heart inclines
To all who love, weep, suffer and despair.
Lit are the lamps within her silver shrines:
Kneel, men of grief. Her hand leads up God's stair.

II. MATER DOLOROSA.

JOHN FITZPATRICK, O.M.I.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1889.

She stands, within the shadow, at the foot
Of the high tree she planted: thirty-three
Full years have sped, and such has grown to be
The stem that bourgeoned forth from Jesse's root.

Spring swiftly passed and panted in pursuit
The eager summer; now she stands to see
The only fruit-time of her only tree:
And all the world is waiting for the Fruit.

Now is faith's sad fruition: this one hour
Of gathered expectation wears the crown
Of the long grief with which the years were rife;
As in her lap—a sudden autumn shower—
The earthquake with his trembling hand shakes down
The red, ripe Fruitage of the Tree of Life.

III. THE FIRST LADY-DAY: Acts II. 42.

ARTHUR M. MORGAN, M.A.

Mother of God, who, meekly kneeling, hearest
'Ave' for 'Eva,' in that lowly room,
Who, for thy soul's fair odour and white bloom,
To him, who bade thee bloom for all, art dearest—
Oh, when the sere leaf of the world is serest,
And paths are dim and kindly love is cold,
What shall he say and do and be, who nearest
The lily of thy life, his course would hold?
Oh, when men walk, a little while, by vision,
None shall the lonely mother-heights draw nigh;
But when the Spirit shall be sin's excision,
And thou, meek Maid, shalt come as from on high,
Oh, by true seekers of the soul's One Bread,
Mother of God, thou shalt be followèd.

IV. THE VIRGIN MOTHER.

HENRY NUTCOMBE OXENHAM, M.A.: 1829–1888.

FROM 'THE SENTENCE OF KAÏRES,' 1854.

'Ave, Maria'; oh, what vision blest
Thy name unveils before the adoring eye—
Thou, whom alone of Eve's fallen progeny
Sin might not harm, nor Satan's power molest;
Whose peerless glory Gabriel's lips confessed,
The Spirit's Bride, the Incarnate Son's abode,
Daughter of earth and Mother of thy God—
Since in thy womb the Eternal deigned to rest.
Mother and Maiden, with intenser ray
Thy path still kindled towards the perfect day,
Till he arose, the Dayspring from on high,
To crown the gifts of unresisted grace,
The love divine, the virgin purity,
That made thy bosom his chosen resting-place.

V. DUM PENDEBAT FILIUS.

ROBERT STEGGALL: 1830–1890.

FROM 'THE MONTH,' 1890.

Yea, was e'er spectacle, for piteous woe,
Like unto that, when heart-pierced through and through
With dolours that no murmur from it drew,
Mary beheld her Son, in torture slow,
Dying upon the cross—with power to know
And feel as none beside may ever do,
His every torment, while she him did view
The whole world's pain and anguish undergo?

Yet for her grief so great, how far beyond
As heaven from earth, what all hearts else may prove,
Her own sweet joy, who loved with love more fond
Than of all mothers, Mother thrice-blest, she,
Of him, the Author of all joy and love
Throughout all time and for eternity.

VI. TWO SONNETS.

AUBREY DE VERE.

Written on hearing that a Catholic Church was to be built at Ambleside, and dedicated under the title of 'Sta. Maria Amabilis.'

I

A ROMAN host descended from the height
Of Kirkstone Pass, rock-walled and roofed with cloud:
Slowly they trod: sudden they cried aloud:
The mists had risen—what met their raptured sight?
A golden vale sun-saturate, on the right,
Nor vexed by storm, nor veiled by flying shroud
Slept 'mid green hills: a rainbow o'er it bowed:
Upon the left, a blue lake laughed in light.
For years embosomed in that gracious valley,
At last those warriors found a stainless bliss;
They wreathed its flowers; in skiff, or bannered galley
They clove its lake; its lawns, its woods they ranged;
Parting, a name they gave it—scarcely changed,
That name survives—'Situs Amabilis.'

II

A GRATEFUL name, loving and sweet; yet, sweeter
Among our Lady's titles one there is,
One loving more—'Mater Amabilis.'
By it, her destined fane ere long shall greet her;
By it, shall souls sore tried for help entreat her,
When fiercer tempests round them rave and hiss

Than those that shake black tarn, or precipice:
For mountain-girdled church what name were meeter?
Ascend, pure walls. Centuries to come shall hear
From hill to hill again her church-bells ringing,
Her 'Ave, Stella,' cheer the dawn-touched water;
Old men grow young once more, when, tottering near,
They catch the chime of English children singing
Her anthem, 'Salve, Redemptoris Mater.'

VII. ON THE MARIEN CAPELLE: CARLSBAD.

R. E. EGERTON-WARBURTON: 1804–1891.

One silver star with evening's twilight strove;
Mid the dark pines, which base and summit hide,
A lone lamp glimmered on the mountain-side,
As 'twere a star reflected from above;
The Chapel of the Virgin—cold in love,
And proud of heart, forbear ye to deride;
Judge not his conscience, nor a brother chide,
Though to yourselves a stumbling-block it prove.
On this pure spot, its shrine with offerings hung,
Its rock by knees of suppliant pilgrims worn,
Intruding—dare I, prayerless, hence depart?
'Hail, Virgin-Mother, highly Blessed': my tongue
Repeats the salutation, while my heart
Bows down in worship to the Virgin-born.

NOTES.

Lyrics. No. III. Line 2: 'Looked' his pain; See St. Luke xxii. 61. Mrs. Browning has written two beautiful sonnets on 'the Look' and the 'Meaning' of it. (Editor.) No. VI. 1. Line 14: 'Situs Amabilis' is said to have been transformed into 'Ambleside.' (Author.)

From 'Steps to the Temple'

RICHARD CRASHAW: 1613–1650.

I. SANCTA MARIA DOLORUM.

A pathetical descant upon the devout plain-song of Stabat Mater Dolorosa.

In shade of death's sad tree stood doleful she.
Ah, she, now by none other
Name to be known, alas, but Sorrow's Mother.
Before her eyes,
Hers, and the whole world's joys,
Hanging all torn she sees; and in his woes
And pains, her pangs and throes:
Each wound of his, from every part,
All, more at home in her one heart.

What kind of marble, than, is that cold man
Who can look on and see,
Nor keep such noble sorrows company?
Sure, e'en from you
(My flints) some drops are due,
To see so many unkind swords contest
So fast for one soft breast;
While, with a faithful, mutual flood,
Her eyes bleed tears, his wounds weep blood.

Oh, costly intercourse of deaths, and worse—
Divided loves. While Son and Mother
Discourse alternate wounds to one another,
Quick deaths that grow
And gather, as they come and go.

His nails write swords in her, which soon her heart
Pays back with more than their own smart.
Her swords, still growing with his pain,
Turn spears, and straight come home again.

She sees her Son, her God, bow with a load
Of borrowed sins; and swim
In woes that were not made for him.
Ah, hard command
Of love; here must she stand,
Charged to look on, and with a steadfast eye
See her Life die;
Leaving her only so much breath
As serves to keep alive her death.

O Mother, Turtle-dove, soft Source of Love,
That these dry lids might borrow
Something from thy full seas of sorrow.
Oh, in that breast
Of thine—the noblest nest
Both of love's fires and floods—might I recline
This hard, cold heart of mine.
The chill lump would relent, and prove
Soft subject for the siege of love.

Oh, teach those wounds to bleed in me; me, so to read
This book of loves, thus writ
In lines of death, my life may copy it
With loyal cares.
Oh, let me here claim shares.
Yield something in thy sad prerogative,
(Great Queen of Griefs) and give
Me, too, my tears; who, though all stone,
Think much that thou shouldst mourn alone.

Yea, let my life and me fix here with thee,
And at the humble foot
Of this fair tree, take our eternal root.
That so we may
At least be in love's way;
And in these chaste wars, while the winged wounds flee
So fast 'twixt him and thee,
My breast may catch the kiss of some kind dart,
Though, as at second hand, from either heart.

O you, your own best darts, dear, doleful hearts,
Hail, and strike home, and make me see
That wounded bosoms their own weapons be.
Come, wounds; come, darts;
Nailed hands and pierced hearts;
Come, your whole selves, Sorrow's great Son and Mother;
Nor grudge a younger brother
Of griefs his portion, who (had all their due)
One single wound should not have left for you.

Shall I set there so deep a share,
(Dear wounds) and only now
In sorrows draw no dividend with you?
Oh, be more wise,
If not more soft, mine eyes;
Flow, tardy founts, and into decent showers
Dissolve my days and hours:
And, if thou yet (faint soul) desert
To bleed with him, fail not to weep with her.

Rich Queen, lend some relief; at least an alms of grief
To a heart who, by sad right of sin,
Could prove the whole sum (too sure) due to him.

By all those stings
Of love, sweet-bitter things,
Which these torn hands transcribed on thy true heart;
Oh, teach mine, too, the art
To study him so, till we mix
Wounds, and become one crucifix.

Oh, let me suck the wine so long of this chaste Vine,
Till drunk of the dear wounds, I be
A lost thing to the world, as it to me.
O faithful Friend
Of me and of my end,
Fold up my life in love; and lay it beneath
My dear Lord's vital death.
Lo, heart, thy hope's whole plea, her precious breath
Poured out in prayers for thee—thy Lord's in death.

II. IN THE GLORIOUS ASSUMPTION.

HARK; she is called, the parting hour is come;
Take thy farewell, poor world, Heaven must go home.
A piece of heavenly-earth; purer and brighter
Than the chaste stars, whose choice lamps come to light her,
Whilst through the crystal orbs clearer than they
She climbs; and makes a far more milky-way.
She's called. Hark, how the dear immortal Dove
Sighs to his silver Mate, 'Rise up, my Love;
Rise up, my Fair, my spotless One':
The winter's past; the rain is gone;
The spring is come; the flowers appear—
No sweets (save thou) are wanting here.
Come away, my Love; come away, my Dove;

Cast off delay:
The court of heaven is come to wait upon thee home.
Come, come away.

The flowers appear,
Or quickly would, wert thou once here.
The spring is come, or if it stay,
'Tis to keep time with thy delay.
The rain is gone, except so much as we
Detain in needful tears, to weep the want of thee.
The winter is past,
Or if he make less haste,
His answer is, why she does so,
If summer come not, how can winter go?
Come away, come away.
The shrill winds chide; the waters weep thy stay;
The fountains murmur; and each loftiest tree
Bows lowest his leafy top, to look for thee.
Come away, my Love; come away, my Dove;
Cast off delay:
The court of heaven is come to wait upon thee home;
Come, come away.

She's called again. And will she go?
When heaven bids come, who can say No?
Heaven calls her, and she must away;
Heaven will not, and she cannot, stay.
Go, then; go, glorious on the golden wings
Of the bright youth of heaven, that sings
Under so sweet a burden. Go,
Since thy dread Son will have it so.
And while thou goest, our song and we
Will, as we may, reach after thee.
Hail, holy Queen of humble hearts:
We in thy praise will have our parts.
And though thy dearest looks must now give light
To none but the blest heavens, whose bright

Beholders, lost in sweet delight,
Feed for ever their fair sight
With those divinest eyes, which we
And our dark world no more shall see ;
Though our poor eyes are parted so,
Yet, shall our lips never let go
Thy gracious name ; but, to the last,
Our loving song shall hold it fast.
Thy precious name shall be
Thyself to us ; and we
With holy care will keep it by us.
We to the last will hold it fast,
And no Assumption shall deny us.
All the sweetest showers
Of our fairest flowers
Will we strew upon it.
Though our sweets cannot make
It sweeter, they can take
Themselves new sweetness from it.
Maria, men and angels sing,
Maria, Mother of our King.
Live, rosy Princess, live ; and may the bright
Crown of a most incomparable light
Embrace thy radiant brows. Oh, may the best
Of everlasting joys bathe thy white breast.
Live, our chaste Love, the holy Mirth
Of heaven, the humble Pride of earth.
Live, Crown of women, Queen of men ;
Live, Mistress of our song. And when
Our weak desires have done their best,
Sweet angels come and sing the rest.

NOTES.

No. I. Line 10 : Than ; Then. Line 80 : Desert ; Fail ; or, Dare not ; or, perhaps a misprint for Demur.

From 'Divine Poems'

JOHN DONNE: 1573–1631.

FOUR SONNETS FROM A CORONAL OF SEVEN.

LA CORONA.

I. To the Ancient of Days.

Deign at my hands this crown of prayer and praise,
  Weaved in my lone devout melancholy,
  Thou which of good hast, yea, art treasury,
All-changing, unchanged, Ancient of Days.
But do not with a wild crown of frail bays
  Reward my muse's white sincerity;
  But what thy thorny crown gained, that give me,
A crown of glory which doth flower always.
The ends crown our works; but thou crown'st our ends;
  For at our ends begins our endless rest;
  This first last end, now zealously possest
With a strong sober thirst, my soul attends.
'Tis time that voice and heart be lifted high,
Salvation to all that will is nigh.

II. Annunciation.

Salvation to all that will is nigh:
  That All which always is All everywhere;
  Which cannot sin, and yet, all sins must bear;
Which cannot die, yet, cannot choose but die—
Lo, faithful Virgin, yields himself to lie
  In prison in thy womb; and though he there
  Can take no sin, nor thou give, yet, he'll wear
Taken from thence, flesh, which death's force may try.

Ere, by the spheres time was created, thou
Wast in his mind—which is thy Son and Brother,
Whom thou conceivedst—conceived ; yea, thou art now
Thy Maker's Maker, and thy Father's Mother :
Thou hast Light in dark, and shut in little room
Immensity, cloistered in thy dear womb.

III. Nativity.

Immensity, cloistered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves his well-beloved imprisonment ;
There he hath made himself, to his intent,
Weak enough now into our world to come.
But oh, for thee, for him, hath the inn no room ?
Yet lay him in this stall ; and from the orient,
Stars and wise men shall travail, to prevent
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how he,
That fills all place (yet none holds him) doth lie ?
Was not his pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pitièd of thee ?
Kiss him ; and with him into Egypt go
With his kind Mother, who partakes thy woe.

IV. In the Temple.

With his kind Mother, who partakes thy woe,
Joseph, turn back : see, where your Child doth sit
Blowing, yea, blowing out those sparks of wit,
Which himself on those doctors did bestow.
The Word but lately could not speak ; and lo,
It suddenly speaks wonders. Whence comes it,
That all which was, and all which would be, writ
A shallow-seeming Child should deeply know ?
His Godhead was not soul to his Manhood ;

Nor had time mellowed him to this ripeness ;
But as for one which hath long tasks, 'tis good
With the sun to begin his business,
He, in his age's morning, thus began
By miracles exceeding power of man.

NOTE.

A selection from a Coronal of Sonnets on the Life of our Lord. The first line of each succeeding sonnet is the same with the last line of its predecessor ; and the last line of the last sonnet is a repetition of the first line of the first.

Ladye-Chapel at Eden Hall, and other Verse

ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

FROM 'THE AVE MARIA,' U.S.A. 1887 ; 'CROWNED WITH STARS' ; AND 'POEMS,' 1893.

I. LADYE-CHAPEL AT EDEN HALL.

Close to the Sacred Heart, it nestles fair—
A marble poem ; an æsthetic dream
Of sculptured beauty, fit to be the theme
Of angel fancies ; a Madonna-prayer
Uttered in stone. Round columns light as air,
And fretted cornice, Sharon's Rose is wreathed—
The passion-flower, the thorn-girt lily rare,
The palm, the wheat, the grapes in vine-leaves sheathed.
Tenderly bright, from mullioned windows glow
Our Lady's chaplet-mysteries. Behold,
Her maiden statue in that shrine of snow,
Looks upward to the skies of blue and gold ;
Content that in the crypt, beneath her shining feet,
The holy ones repose in dreamless slumber sweet.

II. MADONNA OF THE LILY.

O 'Vergine del Giglio,'
O Lily of all lilies white,
Like fairest flakes of moonlit snow,
Thy petals gleam through earth's dim night:
Upon thy golden anthers shine
The starbeams chaste, the dewdrops pure;
And in thy bright corolla's shrine,
The precious pollen sleeps secure.

How rare, how subtile thy perfume—
The essence of all virgin bliss;
How delicate thy maiden bloom—
The leaves the Spirit joyed to kiss;
Sweet Lily, in our souls restore
The pure, primeval Paradise,
The fragrance of lost Eden's shore,
The blest aroma of the skies.

Ah, dreams of thee are like those birds
Which round the South-Sea islands float,
And o'er the waters brood and brood,
With many a soft and plaintive note;
For they upon the waves distil
An oil which soothes the roughest seas—
And thoughts of thee, sweet Queen, can still
The rudest passions into peace.

O fair, O pure, O sinless Maid,
Dear 'Vergine del Giglio,'
No soul hath ever sought thine aid,
And been rejected in its woe;
The saints may clasp thy stem of light,
Drink dews and perfumes from thy vase—
O Lily of all lilies white,
Allure us, sinners, unto grace.

III. MARIA IMMACULATA.

'PURE as the snow,' we say. Ah, never flake
Fell through the air
One-tenth as fair
As Mary's soul was made for Christ's dear sake.
Virgin Immaculate,
The whitest whiteness of the Alpine snows,
Beside thy stainless spirit, dusky grows.

'Pure as the stars.' Ah, never lovely night
Wore in its diadem
So pure a gem
As that which fills the ages with its light.
Virgin Immaculate,
The peerless splendours of thy soul by far
Outshine the glow of heaven's serenest star.

'Pure as the lilies.' Mother dear, forgive
The fond, but feeble trope.
Mother of Hope,
Fair Love and Holy Fear, there does not live,
Virgin Immaculate,
In all the grassy haunts where lilies blow,
As white, as rare, as sweet a flower as thou.

'Pure as the breath of God.' Oh, clean of heart,
These happy words can tell
The miracle
Of how divinely innocent thou art.
Virgin Immaculate,
Under thy shining cloak our vileness hide,
Lest her own kindred should disgrace the Bride.

Imitations of Ancient English Poetry of the Thirteenth Century

AUGUSTA THEODOSIA DRANE.

FROM 'SONGS IN THE NIGHT,' 1876.

I. A PRAYER TO OUR LADY.

MARY, Mother, hail to thee ;
Mary, Maiden, think on me ;
Mother-Maid was never known,
Ladye, save in thee alone.
Sweetest Maiden, pure from stain,
Shield thou me from sin and pain ;
From all evil guard thou me,
Of thine endless charity.
By thy five joys, Ladye, win
Grace that I may fly from sin ;
God's commands and Christian faith
Let me know, and keep till death.
Help the souls I hold as dear,
Shield us all from hellish fear ;
Guard us well from evil fame,
And from thoughts and deeds of shame.
For my friends I pray to thee,
Saved for ever may they be ;
By the five joys of thy heart,
May they fly the tempter's dart.
For my foemen, too, I pray,
Let them find the better way,

That nor they, nor I, may die,
Parted from sweet charity.
Sweetest Ladye, Full of grace,
Every good in thee finds place ;
Thou art flower of all our kind,
Help the weak and heal the blind.
Plead with Jesus as my friend ;
Lead me to a godly end ;
That anointed, houseled, shriven,
I may win my way to heaven.
Ladye, I will trust in thee,
That my prayer shall granted be ;
I shall, Ladye, then be blithe,
Thee to greet with 'Aves' five.

II. ANOTHER PRAYER TO OUR LADY.

Mary, Ever-blessed Maid,
Full of heavenly bliss,
Sweetest Bud of Paradise,
Flower of gentleness ;
Beseech thy Son, that in his love,
He grant me this,
His grace, wherever I may be,
Never to miss.

Ladye, to thee mine orison
I will begin ;
True love of him, thy sweetest Son,
Teach me to win ;
We live in sad and evil days,
Night closes in ;
But, Ladye, in thy pity save—
Save me from sin.

At mercy's door I needs must knock,
On thee I call ;
My flesh is weak, the world is false—
Look lest I fall ;
I place within thy Mother hands
My trust, my all ;
I am thy child—let me not be
The foul fiend's thrall.

Mine own works, Ladye,
They bear the ban ;
All marred and foolish as they are,
Of fallen man ;
Mother, wilt thou not give thine aid ?
None other can ;
Oh, keep thou me, full well thou may'st—
Thou helpest many a man.

Blessed be thy name, Ladye,
So fair and bright ;
My hope rests ever upon thee
By day and night ;
Oh, let me for thy pity plead—
'Tis a child's right,
Who fain would see his Mother's face,
In heavenly light.

Ah, woe is me, for I must bide
The judgment-hour ;
The sins and follies I have done,
I rue them sore ;
But, Mother mine, I will let go
Thy hand no more ;
My bark is floating on the waves—
Guide me to shore.

III. MARIS STELLA.

MARY, beautiful and bright 'Velut Maris Stella,'
Brighter than the morning light, 'Parens et Puella,'
I cry to thee, look down on me ;
Ladye, pray thy Son for me, 'Tam pia,'
That thy child may come to thee, 'Maria.'

Sad the earth was and forlorn, 'Eva peccatrice,'
Until Christ our Lord was born 'De te Genitrice' ;
Gabriel's 'Ave' chased away
Darksome night, and brought the day 'Salutis' ;
Thou the Fount whence waters play 'Virtutis.'

Ladye, Flower of living thing, 'Rosa sine spina' ;
Mother of Jesus, heaven's King, 'Gratia divina' ;
'Tis thou in all dost bear the prize,
Ladye, Queen of Paradise, 'Electa,'
Maiden meek and Mother wise, 'Effecta.'

In care thou counsellest the best, 'Felix fecundata' ;
To the weary thou art rest, 'Mater honorata' ;
Plead in thy love to him who gave
His Precious Blood the world to save 'In cruce,'
That we our home with him may have 'In luce.'

Well knows he, that he is thy Son, 'Ventre quem portasti';
All thou dost ask him, then, is won, 'Partum quem lactasti';
So pitiful he is and kind,
By him the road to bliss we find 'Superni' ;
He doth the gates of darkness bind 'Inferni.'

Two Ballads of Our Lady

WILLIAM DUNBAR: XV.–XVI. CENTS.

MODERNISED BY E. M. CLERKE.

I

O Empress high, Celestial Queen most rare,
  Eternal Princess, Flower immaculate,
Our sovereign Help when we to thee repair—
  Hail, Rose intact; hail, Maid inviolate,
  That, with the Father, was predestinate
The Bairn and Maker of us all to bear,
  Untouched with slightest soil of sinful state,
But, Virgin pure, more clear than crystal fair.

O Blessed Rose, O Gem of chastity,
  O Well of beauty, of all goodness Store,
O Way of bliss, Flower of virginity,
  O Fount of truth, O Star ne'er darkened o'er—
  Grant sinful me, who live in foulness sore,
To track the steps of perfect charity,
  And to forsake my sins both less and more,
Aye serving him who shed his Blood for me.

O Blessed Lady, of all goodness made,
  Since all my hope and trust is in your grace,
By your high sweetness let your Son be prayed,
  To grant me leisure ere I die; and space
  From out my soul all foulness to erase;
And aye to live in virtue pure arrayed,

From out the fiend's close bondage and embrace—
Now, glorious Lady, of your goodness aid.

For e'en as Phœbus, with his beams so bright,
Illumines all this earth in longitude,
E'en so, your grace, your beauty and your might
Adorneth all this world in latitude ;
Therefore to me ye show your gratitude
And your magnificence, that day and night
Your grace benign to me of life be food ;
And save me from each foul malignant wight.

II

Rose-Mary, Sum of virtue virginal,
Fresh Flower on whom the dew of heaven downfell ;
O Gem, conjoined in joy angelical,
In whom rejoiced the Saviour was to dwell :
Of refuge Ark, of mercy Spring and Well,
Of Ladies first, as is of letters A,
Empress of heaven, of paradise and hell—
Mother of Christ, O Mary, hail, alway.

O Star, that blindest Phœbus' beams so bright,
With course above the empyrean crystalline ;
Above the sphere of Saturn's highest height,
Surmounting all the angelic orders nine ;
O Lamp, that shin'st before the throne divine,
Where sounds Hosanna in cherubic lay,
With drum and organ, harp and cymbaline—
Mother of Christ, O Mary, hail, alway.

O Cloister chaste of pure Virginity,
That Christ hath closed 'gainst crime for evermo' ;
Triumphant Temple of the Trinity,
That didst the eternal Tartarus o'erthrow ;

Princess of peace, imperial Palm, I trow,
From thee our Samson sprang invict in fray ;
Who, with one buffet, Belial hath laid low—
Mother of Christ, O Mary, hail, alway.

Thy blessed sides the mighty Champion bore,
Who hath, with many a bleeding wound in fight,
Victoriously o'erthrown the dragon hoar
That ready was his flock to slay and smite ;
Nor all the gates of hell him succour might,
Since he that robber's rampart brake away,
While all the demons trembled at the sight—
Mother of Christ, O Mary, hail, alway.

O Maiden meek, chief Mediatrix for man,
And Mother mild, full of humility,
Pray to thy Son, with wounds that sanguine ran,
Whereby for all our trespass slain was he.
And since he bled his Blood upon a tree,
'Gainst Lucifer our foe, to be our stay,
That we in heaven may sing upon our knee—
Mother of Christ, O Mary, hail, alway.

Hail, Pearl made pure ; hail, Port of paradise ;
Hail, Ruby, redolent of rays to us ;
Hail, Crystal clear ; Empress and Queen, hail thrice ;
Mother of God, hail, Maid exalted thus ,
'O Gratia plena, tecum Dominus' ;
With Gabriel that we may sing and say,
'Benedicta tu in mulieribus'—
Mother of Christ, O Mary, hail, alway.

'Light leading unto Light'

JOHN CHARLES EARLE, B.A.: 1814–1885.

FROM 'A HUNDRED SONNETS,' 1870; AND 'LIGHT LEADING UNTO LIGHT,' 1875.

I. HEAVEN IN THE SUN: AN ALLEGORY.

THE Prophet saw a Woman in the Sun
Clothed with his brightness: yet perhaps, the light
Was more than garment, more than throne, or site
Of city of the saints whose race is run.
It may be, that the great effulgent One,
Above all stars and planets, on a height
Of glory fixed for ever, yields delight
To countless souls that have perfection won;
And in its fire absorbs their sacred flame,
And in itself agglomerates their powers,
And, o'er the vast expanse of nature's frame,
Diffuses soul-light with the rolling hours,
Quickening whatever owns a life, or name,
The man, the beast, the bird, the fish, the flowers.

II. THE BRIDE'S CANTICLE.

I CHARGE you, if you my Belovèd see,
To tell him that my soul is sick of love,
And has been, ever since, beneath the tree,
He to my fainting lips did flagons move,
And called me Fair and Undefiled and Dove,
And bore my drooping head upon his knee,
And gave me golden fruit from boughs above,
And kisses sweeter than all wine to me.

Now, when I burn to clasp his garment's hem,
He makes, alas, as though he would pass by.
Does not his signet-ring my finger gem?
Why find I not whom my soul loveth, why?
Tell him, O Daughters of Jerusalem,
That on his bosom I must rest, or die.

III. THE BRIDEGROOM'S CANTICLE.

Arise, my Love: my Fair One, come away:
Winter is past; the rainy-tide is o'er;
The buds are bursting on the tender spray;
The turtle-doves are cooing more and more;
The fig-tree putteth forth her emerald store;
The swelling grapes are fragrant; breezes play,
With wafted spice, about the grassy floor
Of that fair paradise, where, at break of day,
I wait thy advent: for my locks are wet
With heavy night-drops. Come, I yearn to give
Myself to thee where fountains toss their jet,
And all the fruits of honeyed Lebanon thrive:
There will we feed among the lilies met;
There, on my bosom, thou shalt rest and live.

IV. CHRISTMAS DAY.

As one who reaches after toil and fight
A happy place, exalted peers among,
And yet remembers, not without delight,
The small beginnings whence his greatness sprung—
The breast on which he wept, to which he clung—
The spot where earth first opened on his sight—
The garden walk where first his play-shouts rung—
The spate hard by that tumbled down the height—

So Mary, Mother, on the sapphire throne,
Where thou art seated with thy Royal Child,
Thou treasurest in thy memory every stone
And rafter of that inn and manger wild,
Where David's Son became thy very own,
And on thy smile Incarnate-Godhead smiled.

V. BRACKET IN THE LIBRARY.

See you that bracket where the Virgin stands,
A crown upon her head, and in her arms
An Infant very lovely? Mary's charms
Will earn at last the suffrage of all lands.
And when I gaze on her, my heart expands
In filial invocation, that no harms
My studies may engender, no alarms
Affright me from the path of her commands.
Nor of a statue merely do I tell;
The real Mother near me deigns to stay:
There is delusion in our heaven and hell,
Whene'er we dream of them as far away;
We cannot think how near they are, or dwell
More in the centre of their night and day.

VI. THE ASSUMPTION.

I

I cannot think they love the Lord aright,
Or by his promised Spirit have been taught,
Who, from his Mother derogate in aught,
And grudgingly withhold her sovereign right,
And find one speck upon her shield of light,
And deem the sacred Vessel, which has brought
Incarnate-God into the world, is naught
But dust, still soddening in the crypts of night.

No : rather let me cleave to what they say
Who love the legends of the east to reap,
That, when apostles on an August day
Came to the spot where Mary fell on sleep,
They found, where late her precious body lay,
Nought but some fragrant lilies in a heap.

II

'FOUND nought but fragrant lilies in a heap :
And what, then, had become of Mary dead ?'
Oh, slow of heart, to pierce the heavenly keep :
Surely, a host of guardian-angels sped
Unbid, unsummoned, down the inviolate steep,
And hovered o'er the dying Virgin's bed ;
And when, with painless sigh, she drooped her head,
And in the brief embrace of death did sleep,
They claimed her priceless body as their own,
And wafted it with jubilee on high,
And set it down before the rainbowed throne,
Where he she bore in Bethlehem ruled the sky,
And waited—willing not to reign alone—
For her who gave him his Humanity.

Sonnets, Lyrics, Ode, and Nocturne

MAURICE F. EGAN.

FROM 'THE AVE MARIA,' NOTRE DAME, INDIANA, U.S.A., 1888–1890.

I. PROCESSION OF THE YEAR.

IN old processions carved on Grecian urns
The year is typified in forms of grace
Bound by rose-garlands—flying fauns that race
Beneath the load of wine-skins—flame that burns

In upheld torches; thus, the spiral turns
Around the swelling contour of the vase,
Seeming, though dead, to move from place to place,
Through curled acanthus leaves and bending ferns.
Look back on thy procession—and beware,
If here and there a grinning satyr loom
In last year's roses; on this vase of mine
The only flower of all the garlands fair,
That round my heart made circles of sweet bloom,
Is one white lilac from our Lady's shrine.

II. MADONNA OF THE EMPTY ARMS.

The Child was gone: the Mother stood alone
Within her niche above the noisy street,
Where varied sounds against the silence beat,
And children's footsteps echoed on the stone.
'What mean those empty arms; she makes no moan
As if her Child were lost; her smile is sweet,
And every child that passes she will greet
With loving eyes?' The answer seemed unknown.
And yet I found the key: from school each day
The children trooped beneath our Lady's shrine,
And, as each passed, her empty arms were spread,
Like filling wings of angels when away
They bear child-souls up to the Heart Divine.
'I clasp you all; my own Child waits,' she said.

III. MARY'S WOE.

Rare is the heart that in its utmost sorrow,
Finds not another heart to share its woe,
And presage rainbow colours for the morrow—
And God above is kind to hearts below.

Alone: who is alone? The criminal dying,
Though steeped in shameful crimes all through and through,
Will leave some heart that trusted, spite his lying—
Some loving heart that, spite his sins, was true.

The mother from whose sight the cold grave closes
Her son's fair eyes—on whose heart falls the clod
That strikes on him, and crushes her life's roses,
Has still her comfort; for she has her God.

But Mary, near the cross, was of all mothers—
Of all her race, in truth, the most alone:
Her grief, her woe, was not the woe of others;
Nor like to others did she make her moan.

She stood, transfixed, heart-pierced and tearless, gazing
Up through the twilight to the thorn-crowned head,
Whose sacred brow was scarred, whose eyes were glazing,
And saw her not; for he, her God, was dead.

What sorrow like to hers, I ask ye, brothers?
What sorrow like to hers have our hearts known?
Our grief has sharers—half is borne by others;
But Mary bore her crushing woe alone.

IV. VIGIL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

A SWORD of silver cuts the fields asunder—
A silver sword to-night, a lake in June—
And plains of snow reflect, the maples under,
The silver arrows of a wintry moon.

The trees are white with moonlight and with ice-
pearls;
The trees are white, like ghosts we see in dreams;
The air is still: there are no moaning wind-whirls;
And one sees silence in the quivering beams.

December night, December night, how warming
Is all thy coldness to the Christian soul:
Thy very peace at each true heart is storming
In potent waves of love that surging roll.

December night, December night, how glowing
Thy frozen rains upon our warm hearts lie:
Our God upon this vigil is bestowing
A thousand graces from the silver sky.

O moon, O symbol of our Lady's whiteness;
O snow, O symbol of our Lady's heart;
O night, chaste night, bejewelled with argent brightness,
How sweet, how bright, how loving, kind thou art.

O miracle: to-morrow and to-morrow,
In tender reverence shall no praise abate;
For from all seasons shall we new jewels borrow
To deck the Mother born Immaculate.

V. A MAY NOCTURNE.

The wind sings 'Alleluia,' and the sea
Shines in the moonlight like a silver sword;
The waves shout 'Alleluia,' full and free
With joyous sounds—'We hail thy Mother, Lord.'

O night in May: thy air is full of love—
Of love and triumph for our Lady fair;
Behold, her crescent hangs the world above,
And all her stars adorn her mantle rare.

A bridal veil of moonbeams touches earth—
The bridal veil of her, the Spouse of God;
The sparkling river sings a song of mirth,
And flower-faces smile upon the sod.

Nothing is silent: all God's creatures raise
Fugue after fugue of tender love and grace;
The pansies in the garden softly praise
Her spotless thoughts; the earth's a holy place.

Ah, hear the cherry-blossoms whisper sweet,
'Queen of the World, how happy we this night':
Ah, hear the maple-buds in love repeat
The salutation of the lilies white.

O night in May, O lovely night in May—
A lily of the valley sounds her bells,
So soft, so soft, that (silent all the day)
Make music like the sighing of the shells.

No thing is silent in the joyous world:
The lilac sings, 'There is no spot in thee':
A honeysuckle-bud has just unfurled
Before its time, her servitor to be.

Peach-blossom in the moonlight, silver-pink,
Thou singest, too, in perfume delicate;
I hear a dying cadence softly sink—
A daisy duo to her dedicate.

O wind, O waves, O moon, O lovely night:
I know the words of all your songs by heart—
O scented singers in the crescent's light,
Teach us a fugue of meekness for our part.

VI. AVE, MARIA.

'Ave, Maria,' ages bore the phrase ;
'Ave, Maria,' epochs bear it still ;
For when, submissive to her God's sweet will,
She heard it spoken on that day of days,
It made the epoch then.

'Ave, Maria,' not two pretty words
Used by some poets in a convent scene ;
Not only for sweet girls in May-time green,
Not only named with flowers and the birds,
But last on lips of men—

Of men in all the ages since our God
Came to this earth to suffer for his sons ;
It rose in Cæsar's legions, and it runs
In chords sublime wherever any sod
Is soaked with Christian blood.

'Ave, Maria,' prelude of the Word ;
'Ave, Maria,' first on Gabriel's lips ;
'Ave, Maria,' soft as sound of ships
White-winged and speeding—the sweet words are heard
Upon the world's dark flood.

'Twas last upon the lips of Charlemagne ;
False Julian fell when he it uttered not ;
Napoleon lost it—'twas not quite forgot—
And at the end he spoke it not in vain,
Because he spoke it well.

Oh, phrase beloved by angels and by men,
First after 'Jesus' named at mother's knee,
Last spoken ere on earth we cease to be—
That gives each in his war the strength of ten,
And frights the hosts of hell.

Song of Hans, the Tailor

GEORGE ELIOT: 1819–1880.

FROM 'AGATHA,' IN 'THE LEGEND OF JUBAL,' 1868.

I OFT heard more
Of Agatha. I liked to hear her name,
As that of one half grandame and half saint,
Uttered with reverent playfulness. The lads
And younger men all called her 'Mother,' 'Aunt,'
Or 'Granny,' with their pet diminutives,
And bade their lasses and their brides behave
Right well to one who surely made a link
'Twixt faulty folk and God by loving both:
Not one but counted service done by her,
Asking no pay save just her daily bread.
At feasts and weddings, when they passed in groups
Along the vale, and the good country wine,
Being vocal in them, made them quire along
In quaintly mingled mirth and piety,
They fain must jest and play some friendly trick
On three old maids; but when the moment came
Always they bated breath and made their sport
Gentle as feather-stroke, that Agatha
Might like the waking for the love it showed.
Their song made happy music 'mid the hills,
For nature tuned their race to harmony,
And poet Hans, the tailor, wrote them songs
That grew from out their life, as crocuses
From out the meadow's moistness. 'Twas his song
They oft sang, wending homeward from a feast—
The song I give you. It brings in, you see,
Their gentle jesting with the three old maids.

Midnight by the chapel bell :
Homeward, homeward all, farewell :
I with you, and you with me,
Miles are short with company.
Heart of Mary, bless the way,
Keep us all by night and day.

Moon and stars at feast with night
Now have drunk their fill of light.
Home they hurry, making time
Trot apace, like merry rhyme.
Heart of Mary, mystic Rose,
Send us all a sweet repose.

Swiftly through the wood down hill,
Run till you can hear the mill.
Toni's ghost is wandering now,
Shaped just like a snow-white cow.
Heart of Mary, morning Star,
Ward off danger, near or far.

Toni's waggon, with its load
Fell and crushed him in the road,
'Twixt these pine-trees. Never fear :
Give a neighbour's ghost good cheer.
Holy Babe, our God and Brother,
Bind us fast to one another.

Hark, the mill is at its work,
Now we pass beyond the murk
To the hollow, where the moon
Makes her silvery afternoon.
Good Saint Joseph, faithful Spouse,
Help us all to keep our vows.

Here the three old maidens dwell,
Agatha and Kate and Nell ;
See, the moon shines on the thatch,
We will go and shake the latch.
Heart of Mary, Cup of joy,
Give us mirth without alloy.

Hush, 'tis here, no noise, sing low ;
Rap with gentle knuckles—so :
Like the little tapping birds,
On the door ; then sing good words.
Meek Saint Anna, old and fair,
Hallow all the snow-white hair.

Little maidens old, sweet dreams :
Sleep one sleep till morning beams.
Mothers ye, who help us all,
Quick at hand, if ill befall.
Holy Gabriel, lily-laden,
Bless the aged mother-maiden.

Forward, mount the broad hill side,
Swift as soldiers when they ride.
See the two towers how they peep,
Round-capped giants, o'er the steep.
Heart of Mary, by thy sorrow,
Keep us upright through the morrow.

Now they rise quite suddenly,
Like a man from bended knee ;
Now Saint Märgen is in sight,
Here the roads branch off—good night.
Heart of Mary, by thy grace,
Give us with the saints a place.

Oratory Hymns

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER, OF THE ORATORY, D.D.: 1814–1863.

FROM 'HYMNS,' 1849–1861.

I. OUR LADY'S EXPECTATION.

LIKE the dawning of the morning,
On the mountain's golden heights ;
Like the breaking of the moonbeams,
On the gloom of cloudy nights ;
Like a secret told by angels,
Getting known upon the earth—
Is the Mother's expectation
Of Messias' speedy birth.

Thou wert happy, blessed Mother,
With the very bliss of heaven,
Since the angel's salutation
In thy raptured ear was given ;
Since the Ave of that midnight,
When thou wert anointed Queen,
Like a river overflowing
Hath the grace within thee been.

On the mountains of Judea,
Like the chariot of the Lord,
Thou wert lifted in thy spirit
By the Uncreated Word ;
Gifts and graces flowed upon thee
In a sweet celestial strife,
And the growing of thy Burden
Was the lightening of thy life.

And what wonders have been in thee,
All the day and all the night,
While the angels fell before thee,
To adore the Light of Light :
While the glory of the Father
Hath been in thee as a home,
And the sceptre of creation
Hath been wielded in thy womb.

And the sweet strains of the psalmist
Were a joy beyond controul ;
And the visions of the prophets
Burnt like transports in thy soul ;
But the Burden that was growing,
And was felt so tenderly,
It was heaven, it was heaven,
Come before its time to thee.

Oh, the feeling of thy Burden,
It was touch and taste and sight ;
It was newer still and newer,
All those nine months, day and night :
Like a treasure unexhausted,
Like a vision unconfessed,
Like a rapture unforgotten—
It lay ever at thy breast.

Every moment did that Burden
Press upon thee with new grace ;
Happy Mother, thou art longing
To behold the Saviour's face :
Oh, his human face and features
Must be passing sweet to see ;
Thou hast seen them, happy Mother,
Ah then, show them now to me.

Thou hast waited, Child of David,
And thy waiting now is o'er ;
Thou hast seen him, blessed Mother,
And wilt see him evermore :
Oh, his human face and features,
They were passing sweet to see :
Thou beholdest them this moment ;
Mother, show them now to me.

II. THE GRANDEURS OF MARY.

WHAT is this grandeur I see up in heaven,
A splendour that looks like a splendour divine?
What creature so near the Creator is throned?
O Mary, those marvellous glories are thine.

But who would have thought that a creature could live
With the fires of the Godhead so awfully nigh?
Oh, who could have dreamed, mighty Mother of God,
That ever God's power could have raised thee so high?

What name can we give to a queenship so grand?
What thought can we think of a glory like this?
Saints and angels lie far in the distance, remote
From the golden excess of thine unmated bliss.

Thy person, thy soul, thy most beautiful form,
Thine office, thy name, thy most singular grace—
God hath made for them, Mother, a world by itself,
A shrine all alone, a most worshipful place.

Mid the blaze of those fires, eternal, unmade,
Thy Maker unspeakably makes thee his own ;
The arms of the Three Uncreated, outstretched,
Round the Word's mortal Mother in rapture are thrown.

Thy sinless conception, thy jubilant birth,
Thy crib and thy cross, thine assumption and crown,
They have raised thee on high to the right hand of him
Whom the spells of thy love to thy bosom drew down.

I am blind with thy glory; in all God's wide world
I find nothing like thee for glory and power:
I can hardly believe that thou grewest on earth,
In the green fields of Juda, a scarce-noticed flower.

And is it not really eternal, divine?
Is it human, created, a glorified heart,
So like God, and not God? Ah, Maker of men,
We bless thee for being the God that thou art.

O Mary, what ravishing pageants I see,
What wonders and works centre round thee in heaven,
What creations of grace fall like light from thy hands,
What creator-like powers to thy prudence are given.

What vast jurisdiction, what numberless realms,
What profusion of dread and unlimited power,
What holy supremacies, awful domains,
The Word's mighty Mother enjoys for her dower.

What grand ministrations of pity and strength,
What endless processions of beautiful light,
What incredible marvels of motherly love,
What queenly resplendence of empire and right.

What sounds as of seas flowing all round thy throne,
What flashings of fire from thy burning abode,
What thunders of glory, what tempests of power,
What calms, like the calms in the Bosom of God.

Inexhaustible wonder; the treasures of God
Seem to multiply under thy marvellous hand;
And the power of thy Son seems to gain and to grow,
When he deigns to obey thy maternal command.

Ten thousand magnificent greatnesses blend
Their vast oceans of light, at the foot of thy throne ;
Ten thousand unspeakable majesties grace
The royalty vested in Mary alone.

But look, what a wonder there is up in God :
One love, like a special perfection, we see ;
And the chief of thy grandeurs, great Mother, is there—
In the love the Eternal himself has for thee.

III. CONSOLATRIX AFFLICTORUM.

Like the voiceless starlight falling
Through the darkness of the night,
Like the silent dewdrops forming
In the cold moon's cloudless light,
So there come to hearts in sorrow
Mary's angels dear and bright.

Like the scents of countless blossoms
That are trembling in the air,
Like the breaths of gums that perfume
Sandy deserts bleak and bare,
Are our Lady's ceaseless answers
To affliction's lowly prayer.

They are endless, they are countless,
Like the leaves upon the trees ;
They are healings sweetly hidden,
Like the fragrance in the breeze ;
They are spirits to the drooping,
Like the freshness from the seas.

They are not like earthly comforts,
Nor like anything on earth ;
They are peacefuller than slumber,
They are cheerfuller than mirth ;
They are light to all life's darkness,
They are plenty to its dearth.

They are presences and foretastes
Of some nameless heavenly things,
From the golden throne of Mary
Wafted down to us on wings ;
Yet they come to none but mourners,
To the hearts that sorrow wrings.

They are wondrous thoughts of Jesus,
They are presences of God,
Giving zest to weary sadness,
Or strange sweetness to the rod,
Filling full of heavenly sunbeams
Sorrow's dark and lone abode.

For they come into our spirits
With a soft and winning might ;
And they make our dead look brighter
In the waking hours of night ;
And they gently turn our darkness
Into depths of tenderest light.

Oh, it is as if some fragments
Of the golden calms of heaven,
By the mercy of our Father,
Into Mary's hands were given ;
But to earth were only falling
Upon hearts with sorrow riven.

For in Mary's ear all sorrow
Singeth ever like a psalm :
Welcome, Mother, are the tempests
Which thou layest with thy calm ;
Sweet the broken hearts thou healest
With thine own heart's nameless balm.

The Virgin, Holy Child and Saint John

MICHAEL FIELD.

ON A PICTURE BY LORENZO DI CREDI, IN THE COLLECTION OF LORD DUDLEY.

FROM 'SIGHT AND SONG,' 1892.

A SPREADING strawberry-tree
Embowers an altar-throne ;
Behind its leaves we see
Fair waters blue in tone ;
Sharp rocks confront the stream and soft
Summits and misty towers :
But sweet Madonna in a croft
Is resting, brimmed with flowers.

Anemones are here ;
How sturdily they grow,
Their brown-stemmed heads in clear
Design against the flow
Of the thin current scarce astir :
Through scrambling cresses strike
Petals of varied lavender,
In chalice and in spike.

The summer light in streams
Has fallen where it can stray
On the blonde Girl, who dreams
So tranquilly all day.
Dropt eyelids of a differing curve,
Deep-dinted lips austere,
Some curious grace of visage serve,
Half-wayward, half-severe.

No stain her cheek has got ;
Its sun-blanch is complete,
Save where one little spot
Burns, rosy with the heat.
To keep that tender carmine free
In lustre, the arbute
Shields with a multiplicity
Of leaves its crimson fruit.

Of corn-flower blue, with gold
Her simple dress is sewn,
A cloak's cerulean fold
About her feet is thrown.
The lining of rich orange hue
Is visible just where
The brilliant and the paler blue
Too crudely would compare.

Mid windings of her wrap,
Her naked Child upon
The cradle of her lap
Blesses adoring John,
Whose flimsy, little shirt is tied
With lilac scarf ; the slim,
Gemmed crosier, propped against his side,
Is far too long for him.

Her scarlet-sandalled foot
Soft resting-place has found ;
Cup-moss and daisy-root
Are thick upon the ground
Almost as in our English dells :
But here is columbine,
And one of its pellucid bells
Doth to the stream incline.

How sweet to dream and pray,
Too blest to understand,
Warm in the lovely grey
Of that illumined land.
O boughs that such red berries bear ;
O river-side of flowers—
No wonder that Madonna there
Nurses her Babe for hours.

NOTE.

In Stanzas III. IV. V. and VIII. slight verbal variations, from the original poem, have been made by the author.

An Overshadowing

ALBERT FLEMING.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1889.

THE sky was all aglow,
And slowly and more slow
The passion-flower swayed above the window-sill ;
And as yet the night was young,
And the moon was scarcely slung,
But all the stars were shining and the land was very still.

In a corner of the room,
Like a star within the gloom,
The great white lily gleamed with a sudden threefold light ;
And it bowed its stately head
As she passed with silent tread,
And drew aside the curtain and looked into the night.

And never stars in skies
Had such depth as her twain eyes,

And all a summer's sunshine was tangled in her hair ;
All silent there she stood
In her peerless Maidenhood,
And the very stars grew brighter at seeing her so fair.

The passion-flower down slips,
Until it sweeps her lips,
And opens all its petals, as if to greet the light ;
And the lily's languorous scent
Floated round her as she leant,
As she leant from out the casement and looked into the night.

Then she spake in accents clear :
'Yea, the time draws very near
When the watchers by thine altars shall see a wondrous thing ;
And a fire is in mine eyes,
And my heart leaps up and cries—
Thou art coming, O Messias ; thou art coming, O my King.

'Yet the seasons wax and wane,
And I lift mine eyes in vain,
And I cannot hear thy footsteps, my Adored ;
Thou shalt search, but canst not find,
Midst the daughters of mankind,
Any maiden meet to be the Mother of her Lord.'

Lo, the east all ruddy glows
With an inmost heart of rose,
And the needles of the pines are black against the sky ;
And the high triumphant song
Rolls the starry fields along,
And beside the water-courses the aspens shake and sigh.

Yet with sweet and steadfast eyes
Did she watch the opening skies,
For she knew the hour was coming that should make her life complete ;
And her heart kept murmuring,
'He is coming, O my King ;
He is coming, the Messias ; and I shall kiss his feet.'

And behold, about her head
Seven stars their glory shed,
And the rush of mighty wings was in the air ;
And the broadening glory rolled
And enwrapped her fold on fold,
And her hands were clasped together as she bent her head in prayer.

Then on her spirit fell
Such a joy ineffable,
And all about her feet the waves of glory roll ;
And no mortal eye might see
How, in awful mystery,
The Spirit of the Godhead o'ershadowed all her soul.

* * *

Mother Anna from the stair
Called her Child to evening prayer,
And the moonlight broadened slowly across the field and wood ;
Heaven's light was on her face
As she meekly took her place—
And in her eyes was shining the light of Motherhood.

Prayers from Goethe's Faust

SIR THEODORE MARTIN.

FROM 'FAUST; A DRAMATIC POEM,' 1866.

I. MARGARET'S PRAYER.

PART I. ACT IV. SECOND SCENE.

In a niche of the wall an Image of the Mater Dolorosa; and in front of it pots, in which Margaret places fresh flowers.

O THOU, the sorest
Pangs that borest,
On mine look down with face benign.
With anguish eyeing
Thy dear Son dying,
The sword that pierced his heart in thine,
Thou to the Father gazest
And sighs upraisest
For his and for thy mortal pine.
Oh, who can feel, as thou,
Thy agony, that now
Tears me and wears me to the bone.
How this poor heart is choked with tears,
All that it yearns for, all it fears,
Thou knowest, thou, and thou alone.
Still, whereso'er I go,
What woe, what woe, what woe
Is in my bosom aching.
When to my room I creep,
I weep, I weep, I weep—
My heart is breaking.
The bow-pots at my window
I with my tears bedewed,
When over them at morn to pluck
These flowers for thee I stood.
Brightly into my chamber shone

The sun, when dawn grew red ;
Already there, all woebegone,
I sat upon my bed.
Help, Sufferer divine :
Save me, oh, save
From shame and from the grave.
And thou, the sorest
Pangs that borest,
On mine look down with countenance benign.

II. PRAYERS OF THE PENITENT WOMEN.

PART II. ACT V. LAST SCENE.

CHORUS OF REPENTANT WOMEN.

UPWARD thou art soaring
To regions eternal ;
Hear our imploring,
Thou, peerless, supernal,
Thou rich to o'erflowing
In pardoning grace.

MAGNA PECCATRIX (*St. Luke* vii. 36–50).

By the love, that bent in weeping
O'er thy Son, divinely born,
His feet with balmy tear-drops steeping
Spite of Pharisaic scorn ;
By the box, that dropped profusely
Ointment precious, odour fine ;
By the tresses, clustering loosely,
That did wipe the limbs divine.

MULIER SAMARITANA (*St. John* iv. 4–42).

By the spring, whereto in dim
Far ages Abraham's flocks were led ;
By the pitcher's cooling rim,
That touched his lips, the Saviour dread ;

By the clear, full source that now
Wells out there in stream abundant,
Through the universe to flow,
Ever sparkling and redundant.

MARIA ÆGYPTIACA (*Acta Sanctorum*).

By that hallowed spot and dear,
Where was laid the Lord Immortal;
By the arm in warning clear
Raised, that thrust me from its portal;
By the forty years I passed,
In deserts lone, of true repentance;
By what on the sand at last
I traced, a blessèd farewell sentence.

THE THREE.

Thou, who from the greatly sinning
Never dost avert thy face,
Still for their repentance winning
An eternal resting-place,
To her, who only once forgot
Herself, vouchsafe thy blessing—
To her, who fell, yet weeted not
Wherein she was transgressing.

UNA PENITENTIUM (*formerly called Margaret*).

Incline, incline,
Peerless One, bright
With effulgence of light,
Unto my bliss thy glance benign.

NOTE.

No. II. Maria Ægyptiaca. Lines 3 and 7: The Saint, before her conversion, was supernaturally prevented from entering a church, where the Holy Cross was exposed; and, at the approach of her departure, she was enabled to write on the ground her name and the time of her death. (Alban Butler.)

Vision of Saint Ildephonsus

ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO, VII. CENTURY.

LOUIS DE GONGORA: 1561–1627

TRANSLATED BY EDWARD CHURTON, M.A.

1800–1874.

FROM 'GONGORA,' 1862.

THE night came on, not wrapt in gloomy shroud
Of shadowy texture, tinged with shapes of fear,
But imaging the pale white gleams that crowd
The twilight air, not dark, nor wholly clear;
Or labouring moon, what time in mantling cloud,
Distressed by wizard's charm, with troubled cheer
She veils her radiant horns, and deals her light
Through glimmering mists, with rays obscurely bright.

So gleamed the conscious air, as though it knew
A sunlike form was posting down the sky:
Borne, not on golden car, but wings that drew
Her glittering throne, whose downy canopy
Was throng of seraphs, quiring as they flew,
In ministering order hovering nigh;
By whom sustained when Mary came, the ray
Clad the dim gloom with purple beams of day.

Upon that famous hill she lighted down
Whose walls, old Spain's high marvel, seemed to rise,
Girt round with rock-built turrets like a crown,
To give her royal welcome, through the skies;

While Tagus, in his echoing channel thrown,
Gave answer to those golden harmonies,
Rejoicing stream, beneath that guarded brow,
Imperial seat of old, empyreal now.

She sought the pastor, whose unwearied hand
The precious crook of sacred metal bore,
The strong in Faith's firm battle to withstand
The Helvidian snake, by Jerome scotched before :
She found him, where for other's weal he planned
And hours of sleep with painful watch outwore :
But then, the fane was lost in dazzling light
Before the saintly Goth's admiring sight.

In terror of that light, so keen, so fair,
The children of the convent, soul-subdued,
Were fixed in gaze ; the boldest person there
As motionless as chiselled marble stood :
But glad as eagle, bathing in the glare
Of sun at noon, was Ildephonsus good,
True to that pen, whose glowing lines record
To what fair heights his eagle-soul had soared.

In that majestic sphere of ruddy glow
Awhile the meek-eyed prelate prostrate lay ;
Then like a spirit rapt from earth below,
Trembling and high up-poised in beaming day,
From the fresh streams of light that outward flow,
He scanned the living form that gives the ray,
As though his sight he feared not to o'erstrain,
Intent he gazed, and turned to gaze again.

The peerless Queen, from her high star-paved floor
Down bending, clad him with a bright brocade ;
The cherub-forms within heaven's golden door
Tread not heaven's courts in pile so rich arrayed :

The gems that spangle heaven and change no more,
  Though not outdone, in radiance seemed to fade
Before that fair embroidery ; not more fair
The glorious stars, than each small ruby there.

What thanks and praise the wondering bishop gave
  For that immortal gift, bestowed so well,
Were theme that other hand and pen must crave,
  Divinely led, like his, in words to tell :
But as the lessening foam on eddying wave
  Dies down with ocean's soft retiring swell,
So died the temple's lustre on the view,
Still lessening as the vision's light withdrew.

O Ever-Virgin, glorious evermore,
  Who wilt not humble love's pure gifts disdain,
A pastor now is ours who brings his store,
  With bronze and jasper-stones, to deck thy fane :
Such strength and grace henceforth shall ne'er deplore
  Time's outrage, but defy his menace vain :
Tall pyramids and walls of weary toil
May moulder ; but these stones time ne'er shall spoil.

A Sandoval, the glory of his race,
  The Argus of our Faith, whose watchful eye,
Keen as an angel's glance in realms of space,
  Invests with awe his purple diginity :
Of those glad throngs, whom robes immortal grace,
  May he increase the goodly company,
Who now to thee, with service duly shown,
Mother and Maid, hath raised this worthy throne.

NOTES.

Line 28 : The Helvidian snake ; St. Ildephonsus wrote a work, 'On the spotless virginity of the Virgin Mary,' against Helvidius.
Line 50 : A bright brocade ; A chasuble, or other vestment.

'Aishah Shechinah,' and other Poems

ROBERT STEPHEN HAWKER, OF MORWENSTOW, M.A.: 1804–1875.

FROM 'THE LAMP,' 1838–1858; AND 'POETICAL WORKS,' 1879.

AND A SONG BY HIS DAUGHTER.

I. AISHAH SHECHINAH.

A SHAPE like folded light, embodied air,
Yet wreathed like flesh and warm;
All that of heaven is feminine and fair,
Moulded in visible Form:
She stood—the Lady-Shechinah of earth,
A Chancel for the sky—
Where woke to breath and beauty God's own birth,
For men to see him by.
Round her—too pure to mingle with the day—
Light that was Life abode;
Folded within her fibres, meekly lay
The link of Boundless God:
So linked, so blent—that when, with pulse fulfilled,
Moved but that Infant Hand—
Far, far away, his conscious Godhead thrilled,
And stars might understand.
Lo, where they pause, with inter-gathering rest
The Threefold and the One:
And lo, he binds them to her orient breast,
His Manhood girded on.
The Zone, where two glad worlds for ever meet,
Beneath that bosom ran:
Deep in that womb, the conquering Paraclete
Smote Godhead on to man.

Sole scene among the stars; where yearning, glide
The Threefold and the One:
Her God upon her lap; the Virgin-Bride,
Her awful Child, her Son.

II. MIRIAM: STAR OF THE SEA.

I AM the sea, that treacherous swells for ever—
It ebbs and flows with one unceasing stream:
Thou art the Star, whose radiance faileth never,
Calm o'er the billowy waves its faithful beam.

I am the sea, whose restless surges tremble,
Moved to and fro by every sigh of night;
Thou art the Star, thy shining eyes resemble
The orb that 'mid the storms is hushed and bright.

My Morning Star, the shades of sorrow banish;
Kindle me hope, and bravery in my soul;
Let care's dark shadows from my spirit vanish,
As mountain-clouds before the orient roll.

My Star of Eve, let thy sweet presence often
Shed on this heart of mine its soothing ray:
Yea, in the war of death, thy light shall soften
The last stern foeman, and his battle day.

Fear's idle dream, and hope's all-shadowy pleasure—
Sorrow and joy, that vain and idle be—
The deep has swallowed up the golden treasure:
Soothe thou the tempest and subdue the sea.

Wave after wave rolls on in ceaseless billow;
Age cannot tame the unconquerable tide;
Yon visible surge is but the stately pillow,
Where the wild storms of ancient waters died.

Thou Star of Peace, glory and gladness blending,
Here, as we lowly kneel, look love on high;
Hail, blessed Orb, alive with light, descending,
A Lamp to lead us to our native sky.

III. THE BIER OF MARY.

Soft eve comes down upon her couch of cloud,
The shadows gather round the dreams of night;
With woeful psalms Jerusalem is loud,
And far and near the funeral torch is bright;
Even the dull feet of age have sought the crowd
To watch, with anxious eyes, a shuddering sight;
From yonder home a silent Corpse they bear,
The dead, the beautiful, the cold, the fair.

They wail for One—Holiest of all her race—
For Mary, Maiden-Mother of the Lord;
The name that, graven in stars, the angels trace,
Hallowed in heaven, and on earth adored:
What eyes shall yet be lifted to that face,
What voices at those feet one day be poured,
When angel-harps the Queen of Heaven declare,
And the Son listens to his Mother's prayer.

Holy and full of heaven her race was run,
Her soul made haste to meet her glorious Child;
He, when the rest had fled, besought Saint John
To choose for his own Mother Mary mild.
Yea, his last thought was hers, when the sad sun
Grew dark; and earthquake, fierce and wild,
Rent shuddering Calvary; and air and sky
Shook to behold the hosts of heaven pass by.

They glide like shadows, silent, dim and pale;
Kinsfolk and strangers throng the peopled street;
Forth at the gate the minstrel leads the wail;
And on the mourners move with lingering feet.
Hark, what stern voices rise; what sounds prevail;
A cry, as when in battle foemen meet:

A circumcised Jew—oh, deed of fear—
Foamed at the Dead, and smote that awful bier.

But lo, a doom. That fierce and lifted hand
Fell, quivering fell, severed by touch unseen ;
The multitude are mute : they understand
That girded angels guard the sacred scene ;
But he, the wretch, clings to that funeral band
With jabbering cry, and rent and tortured mien ;
Low at the rested bier he bends, and there
Shrieks to the Merciful a loud and penitent prayer.

God heard him : God beheld the gushing tear :
His heart was visible to the Eyes divine :
The deep thoughts of his quivering soul were clear
As jewels, 'mid the earthquake, in the mine ;
He lifts his arms once more above the bier,
And clothed with flesh from heaven, new fingers shine ;
He knelt a Hebrew foe, in deed and word—
He rose a Christian man, disciple of the Lord.

In sad Gethsemani, in a chosen grave,
For a set time, they laid their blessed Dead :
There, lilies loved to bloom and boughs to wave
And many a murmured orison was said :
There, burned the nightly star, whose radiance gave
Sign of the sepulchre to Christian tread ;
There too, the chanted psalm was heard at eve,
When harps of heaven were touched, and angels came to grieve.

IV THE LADY'S WELL.

It flowed, like light, from the voice of God
Silent and calm and fair ;

It shone where the child and the parent trod,
In the soft and evening air.

'Look at that spring, my father dear,
Where the white blossoms fell:
Why is it always bright and clear?
And why, the Lady's Well?'

'Once on a time, my own sweet child,
There dwelt across the sea
A lovely Mother, meek and mild,
From blame and blemish free.

'And Mary was her blessèd name,
In every land adored:
Its very sound deep love should claim,
From all who love their Lord.

'A Child was hers—a heavenly birth,
As pure as pure could be:
He had no father of the earth,
The Son of God was he.

'He came down to her from above,
He died upon the cross:
We ne'er can do for him, my love,
What he hath done for us.

'And so, to make his praise endure,
Because of Jesus' fame,
Our fathers called things bright and pure
By his fair Mother's name.

'She is the Lady of the Well—
Her memory was meant,
With lily and with rose to dwell,
By waters innocent.'

V. QUEEN OF THE WAVES: SONG OF THE SAILORS AT HAVRE.

MORWENNA HAWKER.

FROM 'THE MONTH,' 1885.

QUEEN of the Waves, look forth across the ocean,
From north to south, from east to stormy west;
See how the waters, with tumultuous motion,
Rise up and foam without a pause, or rest.

But fear we not, though storm-clouds round us gather;
Thou art our Mother—and thy little Child
Is the All-merciful, our tender Father,
God of the sea and of the tempest wild.

Help, then, sweet Queen, in our exceeding danger;
By thy seven griefs, in pity, Lady, save;
Think of the Babe that slept within the manger,
And helps us now, dear Lady of the Wave.

Up to thy shrine we look, and see the glimmer
Thy votive lamp sheds down on us afar;
Light of our eyes, oh, let it ne'er grow dimmer,
Till in the sky we hail the morning star.

Then joyful hearts shall kneel around thine altar,
And grateful psalms re-echo down the nave:
Never our faith in thy sweet power can falter,
Mother of God, Our Lady of the Wave.

NOTES.

No. I. Aishah: This was the happy name of Eve in the days of her innocence. When she stood before Adam in her blameless beauty, he said, being inspired, 'She shall be called Aishah,' that is to say, Man's, or Man's own, because she is taken out of 'Aish,' Man. (Author.) No. V. On a hill situated at Ste. Adresse, a suburb of Havre, is erected a chapel dedicated to Notre Dame des Flots. It is visible to vessels passing up and down the Channel. (Author.)

Italian Girl's Hymn, Two Sonnets, and a Dirge

FELICIA D. HEMANS: 1793–1835.

I. ITALIAN GIRL'S HYMN TO THE VIRGIN.

In the deep hour of dreams,
Through the dark woods, and past the moaning sea,
And by the star-light gleams—
Mother of Sorrows, lo, I come to thee.

Unto thy shrine I bear
Night-blowing flowers, like my own heart, to lie
All, all unfolded there,
Beneath the meekness of thy pitying eye.

For thou, that once didst move,
In thy still beauty, through an early home,
Thou knowest the grief, the love,
The fear of woman's soul—to thee I come.

Many and sad and deep
Were the thoughts folded in thy silent breast;
Thou, too, couldst watch and weep—
Hear, gentlest Mother, hear a heart opprest.

There is a wandering bark
Bearing one from me o'er the restless wave:
Oh, let thy soft eye mark
His course: be with him, Holiest, guide and save.

My soul is on that way;
My thoughts are travellers, o'er the waters dim;
Through the long weary day
I walk, o'ershadowed by vain dreams of him.

Aid him ; and me, too, aid ;
Oh, 'tis not well, this earthly love's excess :
On thy weak child is laid
The burden of too deep a tenderness.

Too much o'er him is poured
My being's hope—scarce leaving heaven a part ;
Too fearfully adored,
Oh, make not him the chastener of my heart.

I tremble with a sense
Of grief to be : I hear a warning low :
Sweet Mother, call me hence ;
This wild idolatry must end in woe.

The troubled joy of life,
Love's lightning happiness, my soul hath known ;
And worn with feverish strife,
Would fold its wings : take back, take back thine own.

Hark, how the wind swept by :
The tempest's voice comes rolling o'er the wave :
Hope of the sailor's eye
And maiden's heart, blest Mother, guide and save.

II. ANNUNCIATION OF OUR LADY.

Lowliest of Women, and most glorified :
In thy still beauty, sitting calm and lone,
A brightness round thee grew ; and by thy side,
Kindling the air, a Form ethereal shone,
Solemn, yet breathing gladness. From her throne
A Queen had risen with more imperial eye ;
A stately Prophetess of victory,
From her proud lyre had struck a tempest's tone,

For such high tidings as to thee were brought,
Chosen of heaven, that hour : but thou, O thou,
E'en as a flower with gracious rains o'erfraught,
Thy Virgin-head beneath its crown didst bow,
And take to thy meek breast the All-holy Word,
And own thyself the Handmaid of the Lord.

III. SONG OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Yet as a sunburst, flushing mountain-snow,
Fell the celestial touch of fire ere long.
On the pale stillness of thy thoughtful brow,
And thy calm spirit lightened into song,
Unconsciously, perchance, yet free and strong
Flowed the majestic joy of tuneful words,
Which living harps the choirs of heaven among
Might well have linked with their divinest chords.
Full many a strain, borne far on glory's blast,
Shall leave, where once its haughty music passed,
No more to memory than a reed's faint sigh ;
While thine, O childlike Virgin, through all time
Shall send its fervent breath o'er every clime,
Being of God, and therefore not to die.

IV. FOUNT OF THE VIRGIN : A DIRGE.

A beautiful spring in the woods near St. Asaph, formerly covered in with a chapel, is now in ruins. It was dedicated to the Virgin, and, according to Pennant, much the resort of pilgrims. (Author.)

Fount of the Woods, thou art hid no more
From heaven's clear eye, as in time of yore :
For the roof hath sunk from thy mossy walls,
And the sun's free glance on thy slumber falls ;
And the dim tree-shadows across thee pass,
As the boughs are swayed o'er thy silvery glass
And the reddening leaves to thy breast are blown,
When the autumn wind hath a stormy tone ;

And thy bubbles rise to the flashing rain—
Bright Fount, thou art Nature's own again.

Fount of the Vale, thou art sought no more
By the pilgrim's foot, as in time of yore,
When he came from afar his beads to tell,
And to chant his hymn at 'Our Lady's Well.'
There is heard no 'Ave' through thy bowers,
Thou art gleaming lone midst thy water-flowers.
But the herd may drink from thy gushing wave,
And there may the reaper his forehead lave,
And the woodman seeks thee not in vain—
Bright Fount, thou art Nature's own again.

Fount of the Virgin's ruined Shrine,
A voice that speaks of the past is thine ;
It mingles the tone of a thoughtful sigh
With the notes that ring through the laughing sky ;
Midst the mirthful song of the summer bird,
And the sound of the breeze it will yet be heard—
Why is it that thus we may gaze on thee,
To the brilliant sunshine sparkling free?
'Tis that all on earth is of time's domain—
He hath made thee Nature's own again.

Fount of the Chapel, with ages grey,
Thou art springing freshly amidst decay ;
Thy rites are closed, and thy cross lies low,
And the changeful hours breathe o'er thee now.
Yet if at thine altar one holy thought
In man's deep spirit of old hath wrought ;
If peace to the mourner hath here been given,
Or prayer from a chastened heart to heaven—
Be the spot still hallowed while time shall reign,
Who hath made thee Nature's own again.

Our Lady's Death, and other Sonnets

BENJAMIN DIONYSIUS HILL (FATHER EDMUND, C.P.)

FROM 'THE CATHOLIC WORLD,' NEW YORK, 1870–1877; AND 'POEMS,' 1877.

I. OUR LADY'S DEATH.

I

And didst thou die, dear Mother of our Life?
Sin had no part in thee; then how should death?
Methinks, if aught the great tradition saith
Could wake in loving hearts a moment's strife
(I said—my own with her new image rife),
'Twere this. And yet, 'tis certain, next to faith,
Thou didst lie down to render up thy breath:
Though after the seventh sword, no meaner knife
Could pierce that bosom. No, nor did: no sting
Of pain was there; but only joy. The love,
So long thy life ecstatic, and restrained
From setting free thy soul, now gave it wing;
Thy body, soon to reign with it above,
Radiant and fragrant, as in trance, remained.

II

Yes, Mother of God, though thou didst stoop to die,
Death could not mar thy beauty. On thy face
Nor time, nor grief had wrinkle left, or trace;
It had but aged, in God-like majesty;

Mature, yet, save the Mother in thine eye,
As maiden-fresh as when, of all our race,
Thou, first and last, wast greeted 'Full of grace'—
Ere thrice five years had worshipped and gone by.
Mortal thy body; yet it could not know
Mortality's decay. Like sinless Eve's,
It waited but the change on Thabor shown:
And when, at thy sweet will, 'twas first laid low,
Untainted as a lily's folded leaves
It slept—the angels watching by the stone.

III

'At thy sweet will.' Then, wherefore didst thou will
To pass death's portal? To the outward ear
There comes no answer; but the heart can hear.
Thy Son had passed it. Thou, upon 'the Hill
Of Scorn,' hadst stood beside the cross; wouldst still
'Follow the Lamb where'er he went.' Of fear
Thou knewest naught. The cup's last drop, so dear
To him, thy love must share—or miss its fill.
But more—thy other children, even we,
Must enter life through death. And couldst thou brook
To watch our terrors at the dark unknown,
Powerless to stay us with a sympathy
Better than any tender word, or look—
Bidding our steps tread firmly in thine own?

II. SANCTA MARIA.

Sweet name of Mary, name of names save one—
And that, my Queen, so wedded unto thine,
Our hearts hear both in either, and enshrine
Instinctively the Mother with the Son—

The lisping child's new accent has begun,
Heaven-taught, with thee ; first fervent, happy youth
Makes thee the Watch-word of its maiden truth ;
Repentant age, the Hope of the undone.
To me, known late but timely, thou hast been
The noon-day Freshness of a wooded height ;
A Vale of soothing waters ; the Delight
Of fadeless verdure in a desert scene ;
And when, ere long, my day shall set serene,
Be Hesper to an eve without a night.

III. SANCTA DEI GENITRIX.

MOTHER of God : my Queen is simply this.
For this elected, the eternal Mind
Conceived her in its infinite abyss—
With the God-Man, Co-type of human kind.
And she, when came the wondrous hour assigned,
Conceiving her Conceiver, girt him round,
And held in her immaculate womb confined,
Whom 'heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot bound.'
Then brought him forth, her Little One, her Own ;
And fed, a Suckling, at her maiden breast—
The only pillow of his earthly rest,
And still, for ever more, his dearest throne.
O Lady, what the worship faith allows?
The Eternal calls thee Daughter, Mother, Spouse.

IV. SANCTA VIRGO VIRGINUM.

THE Mother of all mothers ; yet, no less
The Virgin of all virgins ; yea, the more :
For 'tis from thy deific fruitfulness
Have drawn all virgins their perennial store.

Since Virgin-Eve grew mother of our loss,
Virginity was barren—until thine,
Which bore the Fruit that, in the press of the cross,
Redeemed us with the virgin-making Wine.
And now Virginity may wed thy Son,
Becoming thus the Mother of fair deeds.
Still, after all the glories it has won
In following the Lamb where'er he leads,
How peerless thine in having drawn him down
And brought him forth—the Virgin's Spouse and Crown.

V. MATER CHRISTI.

MOTHER of Christ—then, Mother of us all :
Mother of God made Man, of Man made God :
The thornless Garden, the immaculate Sod,
Whence sprang the Adam that reversed the fall.
Mother of Christ, the Body mystical,
Of us the members, as of him the head ;
Of him our life, the 'First-born from the dead' ;
Of us baptized into his burial.
Yes, Mother, we were truly born of thee
On Calvary's second Eden—thou its Eve :
Thy dolours were our birth-pangs by the tree
Whereon the Second Adam died to live—
To live in us, thy promised Seed to be,
Who then his death-wound to the snake didst give.

VI. SINE LABE CONCEPTA.

PREDESTINED Second Eve : for this conceived
Immaculate—not lower than the first :
Chosen Beginner in the loss reversed,
And Mediatress in the gain achieved,

When, the new angel, as the old, believed,
Thy hearkening should bless whom Eve's had curst.
And therefore we, whose bondage thou hast burst,
Grateful for our inheritance retrieved,
Must deem this jewel in thy diadem
The brightest—hailing thee alone 'All-fair,'
Nor ever soiled with the original stain :
Alone, save him whose Heart-Blood bought the gem
With peerless grace-preventive none might share—
Redemption's perfect end, all else though vain.

VII. THE THREE EDENS.

Bloomed the first Eden not with man alone,
But woman, equal woman, at his side.
And seemly was it when, together tried,
They fell together—for the two were one.
On Calvary stood the Mother by the Son,
New Eve with Second Adam crucified ;
And as through Eve, in Adam, we had died,
Through Mary was our loss, in Christ, undone.
Then how should not the Paradise regained
Behold its Eve beside her Adam throned ;
Both risen, both ascended—unprofaned
Each virginal body, by the grave disowned ?
Else had our foe his conquest half maintained ;
The primal ruin been but half atoned.

VIII. REQUIES MEA.

Keep me, sweet Love : thy keeping is my rest.
Not safer feels the eaglet from beneath
The wings that roof the inaccessible nest,
Than I when thou art with me, Dearest, Best,
Whose love my life is, yea, my very breath.

Thy Son to Egypt fled, to prove our faith.
Not Herod's men had snatched him from thy breast,
Or changed his thronèd slumber into death.
How wonderful thy keeping, mighty Queen,
So close, so tender ; and as if thine eyes
Had only me to watch, thine arm to screen,
And this inconstant heart were such a prize—
And thou the while, in beatific skies,
Art reigning imperturbably serene.

IX. MONTH OF MAY.

The month of Maia—Cybele's Roman name—
Ere Rome was Christ's. And 'twas for Vulcan's priest
To kindle at her shrine the rosy flame
On sweet May-day. Wombed in the fruitful east,
Not vainly westward, as the myths increased,
This purer rite, nor unprophetic, came :
A flower that should be gathered for the feast
Of truth—with more that erst decked Pagan shame.
Not now the mother of vain gods we pray,
But her, the God-Man's Mother, Ever-a-Maid :
And still to her this fairest month of May
Assign—our hearts upon her altar laid,
That her chaste love, descending with its fire,
May purge them from the dross of base desire.

NOTES.

No. III. Line 8 : 2. Paral. ii. 6. No. IV. Line 8 : Zach. ix. 17. 'Wine springing forth virgins.' No. V. Line 2 : Saint Augustine says, that 'God became Man, that Man might become God.' Line 7 : Col. i. 18. Line 8 : Rom. vi. 4. No. IX. Line 1 : Maia, or Majesta ; not to be confounded with Maia, the mother of Hercules. Line 9 : Cybele was the 'Mater Deum' of the Greeks and Romans. (Author.)

Colloquy between Christ, our Lady and the Angel

JACOPONE DA TODI: XIII. CENTURY.

TRANSLATED BY E. M. CLERKE.

This 'Corrotto' is of special interest, as an early specimen of the form which the Sacred Drama took in Italy, from the introduction of the Angel, or Messenger, who plays a part corresponding to that of the Greek Chorus. (Translator.)

ANGEL: LADY of Paradise,
Thy Son is sold for price,
Christ, blest for evermore.
O Woman, haste and see
How foully used is he;
Meseems he slain will be,
So have they scourged him sore.

MARY: How can such thing be done,
Since guilt in him is none?
O Christ, mine only One:
Ah me, where was he ta'en?

ANGEL: Lady, he is betrayed;
Judas hath bargain made;
Pieces thrice ten were paid—
Great profit doth he gain.

MARY: Help, Magdalen, I pray;
My cup is full to-day;
My Son is led away,
As prophecy hath said.
O Son, O Son, O Son,
O loved and loving One;
Counsel, O Son, is none
For my heart sore bestèd.

Son of the winsome eye,
Son, why dost not reply?
Son, wherefore hide and fly
From the fond breast that fed?

ANGEL: Lady, the cross behold,
By the crowd onward rolled,
Which shall ere long uphold
The true Light raised on high.

MARY: O cross, what dost thou dare?
My Son from me wilt tear?
Shall he hang fastened there,
To whom no sin came nigh?

ANGEL: Help, O thou full of woe;
Thy Son they strip; and lo,
Nailed to the cross, e'en so
Him will the people all.
Help, Lady, help, for grace:
They spit in thy Son's face;
His garments they replace;
And lead to Pilate's hall.

MARY: O Pilate, do not so;
Work not my Son such woe;
For I to thee can show
How false the charges brought.

JEWS: Crucify, crucify,
Who to be king doth try,
Our law's enactment by,
The senate sets at nought.

MARY: List to me, list, I pray:
Think on my grief to-day:
Perchance ye turn away
From that which ye have thought.

ANGEL: Forth then the thieves they lead,
Companions of his need,

A crown of thorns his meed
Who king had claimed to be.

MARY: His clothes they strip away—
Ah, let me see, I pray,
How from sore heart alway
From every limb bleeds he.

ANGEL: Woman, his hand is ta'en
Stretched on the cross amain,
Split with a nail in twain,
So close 'tis fastened there.
The other hand they take,
And to the wood fast make,
While grows each throe and ache
Redoubled everywhere.
Woman, his feet now see
Are nailèd to the tree,
Racked every joint shall be;
Stripped are his limbs full sore—

MARY: And I begin my moan:
Son, my Delight alone;
Son, who hath slain mine Own?
O tender Son, I bore.
Better had they been fain
My heart to rend in twain,
And on the cross refrain
To hang it desolate.

CHRIST: Mother, whence com'st thou so?
Thou deal'st me mortal blow;
Thy weeping adds new woe
To my unhappy state.

MARY: Son, who me thus hath left—
Of Son, Spouse, Sire bereft—
Son, who thy flesh hath cleft?
And who thy limbs despoiled?

CHRIST : Mother, why thus complain ?
I will that ye remain
My friends here to sustain
To gain whom I have toiled.
MARY : Son, speak not so to me ;
I fain would die with thee,
Nor from hence parted be
Till drawn my latest breath.
Our sepulchre be one,
O woeful Mother's Son,
Together be undone,
Mother and Son in death.
CHRIST : Mother, while grief doth rend
Thee to the care I lend
Of John, my chosen friend,
Thy Son's name shall he bear.
John, this my Mother take
For charity's sweet sake ;
Pity her, nor forsake,
Since pierced her heart with care.
MARY : Child, forth thy soul hath fled—
Child of the sore bestèd,
Child of the uncomforted,
Child by foul death o'erthrown,
Child, red and white of cheer,
Child without like, or peer—
To whom can I draw near ?
Son, thou hast left me lone.
O Son, so fair and white,
Son of the aspect bright,
Why did the world's despite
Thee with such scorn refuse ?
Son, sweet and mild alway,
O Son, to sorrow prey,

Thee did the world to-day
With cruel wrong misuse.
John, my son newly ta'en,
Now is thy Brother slain ;
Cleft hath the sword in twain
My heart, as prophesied.

ANGEL : For Mother now and Son,
By cruel death undone,
In sorrow are made one—
Together crucified.

Irish Lyrics and Sonnets

FROM 'THE IRISH MONTHLY,' DUBLIN, 1879–1892.

I. THE NIGHTINGALE.

GERALD GRIFFIN: 1803–1840.

As the mute nightingale in closest groves
Lies hid at noon, but when day's piercing eye
Is locked in night, with full heart beating high
Poureth her plain-song o'er the light she loves ;
So, Virgin Ever-pure and Ever-blest,
Moon of religion, from whose radiant face
Reflected streams the light of heavenly grace
On broken hearts, by contrite thoughts oppressed :
So, Mary, they who justly feel the weight
Of Heaven's offended Majesty, implore
Thy reconciling aid with suppliant knee :
Of sinful man, O sinless Advocate,
To thee they turn, nor him they less adore ;
'Tis still his light they love, less dreadful seen in thee.

II. MARY, MODEL OF HUMILITY.

EDWARD HARDING.

HUMBLEST of all, who aye to God appealed
That but to him thy greatness might be known :
Thy Father heard thy prayer, and he alone
Viewed the supernal power thou wouldst not wield ;
Thy Son heard likewise ; and from all concealed,
Thy wisdom shone, the reflex of his own ;
Heard, too, thy Spouse—though partner of his throne,
His works scarce outline of thy history yield.
'I will exalt the humble,' saith the Lord :
And now, with Motherhood of God and men,
Beloved and blest beyond all human ken,
Thou art the full Fulfilment of his Word.
That God would have thine all thou didst entreat ;
And lo, the very heavens are at thy feet.

III. IN MEMORIAM MISERICORDIÆ DIVINÆ.

RICHARD ROBERT MADDEN, M.D.:
1798–1886.

HAIL, Blessed Virgin ; Holy Mary, hail ;
To love and honour thee, how can I fail
If I adore thy Son, and would prevail
With him in prayer?

What intercession can there be like thine,
So worthy to approach the throne divine
Of grace, all wants and miseries of mine
To plead for there?

The angel's salutation in our ears
Sounds like the sweetest melody : it bears
A message from the Lord on high, that cheers
The heart of man.

Oh, thou art 'Full of grace' ; no child of earth
So spotless ever mother did bring forth,
So pure, and so immaculate ere birth.
That wondrous plan,

Mercy divine revealed, and willed that grace
And nature's union should in thee take place,
Most perfect, sinless of the human race,
Humble and meek.

'Our life, our sweetness and our hope,' to thee
We fly for refuge in our misery ;
Thy Son our Saviour is with thee, and we
That Saviour seek.

In our last moments, Blessed Mary, plead ;
'For us, poor sinners,' deign to intercede :
Jesus and Mary, be these words decreed
The last I speak.

IV. STABAT MATER.

CASSIE M. O'HARA.

WRITTEN IN 1883.

'STABAT.' Silent and calm she bore the blow
That shattered far less loving hearts in twain ;
She heard the moaning plash of that dread rain
Drenching the parchèd sod with crimson flow.
She saw the fatal shadows dawn and grow,
And knew that death was nigh that bed of pain—
Yet still she stood, not crushed to earth, nor slain,
But calm and rock-like, 'mid a sea of woe.

Mother of God, beneath our mystic cross
We too must often bide the anguished years—
Must wait while drag the pain-pulsed moments on.
Oh, win us strength to bear the woe, the loss,
And drink, like thee, a life-long cup of tears
With lips that only say, 'Thy will be done.'

V. MEMORARE: CITEAUX.

CASSIE M. O'HARA.

WRITTEN IN 1883.

'MEMORARE': through the ages,
Lighting saint and sinner low,
Touching heroes, poets, sages,
With a deeper spirit-glow,
Comes the prayer of Mary's Bernard,
Potent now, as long ago,
When it rose like incense heavenward
From the groves of dark Citeaux.

'Memorare, O Maria,'
That it never hath been known
Earthly pleading, 'Mater pia,'
Rose unheeded to thy throne:
Hear us then, who kneel before thee
With a love that fain would grow
To the love that Bernard bore thee,
In the cloisters of Citeaux.

VI. NAME OF MARY.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY: 1844–1890.

DEAR, honoured name, beloved for human ties,
But loved and honoured first that One was given
In living proof, to erring mortal eyes,
That our poor flesh is near akin to heaven.

Sweet word of dual meaning: one of grace,
And born of our kind Advocate above;
And one, by memory linked to that dear face
That blessed my childhood with its mother-love,

And taught me first the simple prayer: 'To thee,
Poor banished sons of Eve, we send our cries.'
Through mist of years, those words recall to me
A childish face upturned to loving eyes.

And yet, to some the name of Mary bears
No special meaning and no gracious power;
In that dear word they seek for hidden snares,
As wasps find poison in the sweetest flower.

But faithful hearts can see, o'er doubts and fears,
The Virgin-link that binds the Lord to earth;
Which, to the upturned trusting face, appears
Greater than angel, though of human birth.

The sweet-faced moon reflects, on cheerless night,
The rays of hidden sun that rise to-morrow;
So, unseen God still lets his promised light,
Through holy Mary, shine upon our sorrow.

VII. MARY'S AUTUMN MAY.

ARTHUR RYAN.

In Australia, as May is a winter month, the Mois de Marie is kept in October. Pope Leo XIII. has now given a second month to Our Lady.

Say, dearest Mother Mary, can it be
That, having May, thou claim'st October too?
The flowers of spring we plucked and gave to thee—
Are these sad leaves of autumn also due?

When evenings first were lengthening, calm and warm,
We lit thy altar, gay with lily bloom ;
Now falls the night full swift with threatening storm,
And still thy tapers stay the advancing gloom.

'Tis thine, and ten times welcome, Mother dear :
This ripe and crisp October month is thine :
What though our flowers and leaves be scant and sere,
The calendar of love knows no decline.

Accept these autumn wreaths—our chaplets bright,
With crimson-yellow stained like sunset skies :
O Star of morn, be still our Star at night,
And bless our falling years as thou didst bless their rise.

VIII. ON GAROFALO'S 'DESCENT FROM THE CROSS,' IN THE BORGHESE GALLERY, ROME.

ELLEN FITZ-SIMON (NÉE O'CONNELL): 1805–1883.

While Magdalen seems clamorous in her woe,
Our Lady's silent sorrow moves me more,
As there she kneeleth, calmly sad, before
The body of her Son, and gazeth so
Upon his pallid blood-stained brow, as though
She yet endured the agony he bore
Through that long, endless day. She blanched not, no ;
But stood beside the cross till all was o'er.
Oh, what a weight of sorrow crushed thy heart,
Mother most dear. What depth of agony
Didst thou then bear, and willingly, for me
And for all sinners. By the painter's art
As here, thy sufferings we presented see,
We grateful raise a hymn of praise to thee.

Some Early Italian Laude and Sonnets

VARIOUS AUTHORS: XV.–XVI. CENTS.

TRANSLATED (1891) *BY E. M. CLERKE.*

I. VERONICA GAMBARA: 1485–1550.

I

O Virgin pure, this day, by means of thee,
Such marvel is to earth made manifest,
That struck with wonder and with awe oppressed,
Doth nature's self the mighty portent see—
For God is Man; 'neath human care is he;
And in our weary mortal flesh though dressed,
Himself is still; Divinity suppressed,
And hid in childish Form, Infinity.
Nor mixed, nor e'er divided hath he been;
But ever, truly God and truly Man,
Powerful in heaven as on the earth below.
Turn on me, Virgin, then, the rays serene
Of thy sweet grace; and ope my sense to scan
All that a mystery so deep doth show.

II

Oh, mystery, faith alone can comprehend;
Thy beauteous Form made God's high Temple, see.
O Saintly Virgin, all humility,
In whom he willed from high heaven to descend;
So by thy meekness drawn to condescend,
And by such wish that we redeemed should be,
That he, in thee first closed, went forth from thee
Nor did the cloistered virgin cell offend

In thee created, like the heavenly dew
In snowy fleece, while parched the earth around,
It only steeped in moisture seems to be—
The former fact this figure doth construe :
Wherefore with thee to-day our songs resound,
Praise to the Lord, ne'er praised sufficiently.

II. BERNARDO GIAMBULLARI.

ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF FLORENCE.

HAIL, Full of grace, alway ;
Mary, thy goodness show ;
Have pity, and to Christ for pity go,
For this fair city to such woe a prey.

Mary, in mercy spare ;
Ah, turn thy pitying eyes on us below ;
Look on thy city fair,
That ne'er was yet so agonised in woe ;
Have pity, and to Christ for pity go,
That he would peace restore :
Have mercy, I implore,
On this fair city to such woe a prey.

Mercy and peace serene,
Mary, thy Florence doth entreat of thee ;
Ah, from rebellion wean
The afflicted people by thy clemency ;
No fiercer plague can be
Than discord wild :
Ah, pity, Mary mild,
On this fair city to such woe a prey.

For charity is dead,
Faith quenched, and justice banished hence to fly :
Pride is our rule instead ;
In luxury and envy each doth vie,
Mary ; for help we cry

By innocence besought:
Ah, take a pitying thought
Of this fair city to such woe a prey.

For save thy mercy be
Our shield, sweet Mary, from all peril sore,
No other shield have we;
Then in thy pity, from thy Son implore
Of aid and counsel store,
Wherein our safety lies:
Ah, be thy goodness touched in tender wise
By this fair city to such woe a prey.

III. LORENZO DE' MEDICI: 1448–1492

From the star highest placed
On earth, a flood of light divine hath poured.
O glorious Queen,
O Virgin-Spouse and Mother of the Lord,
O matin Ray serene—
Happy who bends, I ween,
Unto this holy Mother, fair and chaste.

O Sweetness prized;
O Joy supreme; O Solace and Support;
Maid, holy, undefiled,
The sinner's Heaven, Victory and Port;
Vase, the Messiah's styled,
Our Saviour's; Mary mild,
Guide to that Treasure by the world despised.

Mother, so worthy thou,
That heaven and earth and sun and stars and sea
Praise thee in festal hymn.
O distant Light of shining radiancy;
O Memory never dim,
Gate, Triumph-pride of him—
That Treasure who in heaven reigns happy now.

IV. UNKNOWN AUTHORS.

I

MERCY I call thee, Virgin Mary great—
Mercy, of God the Mother and the Bride ;
Mercy I call thee, who in toil abide ;
Mercy I call thee, in my woeful state.
Alas, I die, by mine own fault o'erta'en ;
Alas, I die, if thou do not sustain ;
Alas, I die, compelled by grief and pain.
Thou only hast the Prop of sinners been ;
Thou only Empress of the world, I ween ;
Thou only heaven's high Lady art and Queen.
Deliver me, by thy soft beauty's ray ;
Deliver me, by thy glad mysteries seven ;
Deliver me, by all thy joys in heaven ;
Deliver me, by Christ thy Son, I pray :
Mercy I call thee, my soul's Love alway.

II

MOTHER, who madest him who thee had made,
O Vessel, formed such treasure to contain,
To thee the angelic choir lifts festive strain :
Hail, Mary, Empress of surpassing grade.
Hail, Queen, O holiest Woman, hail to thee.
Mother benign, whose charms and grace ne'er fail,
O Lady, stainless and triumphant, hail :
The blessed host doth ever chant in glee.
How many glories, Woman blest indeed,
How many joys thy mind do recreate ;
Thy rapture all the blest participate ;
Courteous, benign, beloved, they share thy meed.

Mother out of Sight

JOHN KEBLE: 1792–1866.

FROM 'MISCELLANEOUS POEMS,' 1869.

A poem originally written for 'Lyra Innocentium,' 1844.

Saw ye the bright-eyed stately child,
With sunny locks so soft and wild,
How in a moment, round the room
His keen eye glanced; then into gloom
Retired, as they who suffer wrong
When most assured they look and long?
Heard ye the quick appeal, half in dim fear,
In anger half: 'My mother is not here'?

Perchance some burdened heart was nigh
To echo back that yearning cry,
In deeper chords than may be known
To the dull outward ear alone:
What if our English air be stirred
With sighs from saintly bosoms heard,
Or penitents, to leaning angels dear,
'Our own, our only Mother is not here.'

The murmurings of that boyish heart
They hush, with many a fostering art:
Soon o'er the islands of the west
The weary sun will sink to rest;
The rose-tints fade that gradual now
Are climbing Ben-y-veer's green brow;
Soon o'er the loch the twilight stars will peer—
Then shalt thou feel thy soul's Desire is here.

Lightly they soothe the fair, fond boy ;
Nor is there not a hope and joy
For spirits that half-orphaned roam,
Forlorn in their far island home ;
Oft, as in penance lowly bowed,
Prayer, like a gentle evening cloud,
Enfolds them—through the mist they seem to trace,
By shadowy gleams, a Royal Mother's face.

The holy Church is at their side,
Not in her robes a glorious Bride ;
As Sister named of Mercy mild
At midnight by a fevered child
Might watch, and to the dim eye seem
A white-stoled angel in a dream :
Such may the presence of the Spouse appear
To tender trembling hearts, so faint, so dear.

The babe, for that sweet vision's sake,
Courts longer trance, afraid to wake ;
And we, for love, would fain lie still,
Though in dim faith, if so he will.
And wills he not? Are not his signs
Around us, oft as day declines?
Fails he to bless, or home, or choral throng,
Where true hearts breathe his Mother's evensong?

Mother of God, oh, not in vain,
We learned of old thy lowly strain ;
Fain in thy shadow would we rest,
And kneel with thee, and call thee Blest ;
With thee would 'magnify the Lord,'
And if thou art not here adored,
Yet seek we, day by day, the love and fear
Which bring thee, with all saints near and more near.

What glory thou above hast won,
By special grace of thy dear Son,
We see not yet, nor dare espy
Thy crownèd Form with open eye :
Rather, beside the manger meek
Thee bending with veiled brow we seek ;
Or where the angel in the thrice-great Name
Hailed thee—and Jesus to thy bosom came.

Yearly since then, with bitterer cry,
Man hath assailed the throne on high,
And sin and hate more fiercely striven
To mar the league 'twixt earth and heaven :
But the dread tie, that pardoning hour,
Made fast in Mary's awful bower,
Hath mightier proved to bind than we to break ;
None may that work undo, that Flesh unmake.

Thenceforth, whom thousand worlds adore,
He calls thee Mother evermore ;
Angel, nor saint his face may see
Apart from what he took of thee ;
How may we choose but name thy name,
Echoing below their high acclaim
In holy creeds ? Since, earthly song and prayer
Must keep faint time to the dread anthem there.

How but in love on thine own days,
Thou blissful One, upon thee gaze ?
Nay every day, each suppliant hour,
Whene'er we kneel in aisle or bower,
Thy glories we may greet unblamed,
Nor shun the lay by seraphs framed :
'Hail, Mary, Full of grace.' Oh, welcome sweet,
Which daily in all lands all saints repeat.

Fair greeting, with our matin vows
Paid duly to the enthronèd Spouse,
His Church and Bride, here and on high,
Figured in her deep purity,
Who, born of Eve, high mercy won
To bear and nurse the Eternal Son :
Oh, awful station, to no seraph given—
On this side touching sin, on the other heaven.

Therefore, as kneeling day by day,
We to our Father duteous pray,
So, unforbidden may we speak
An 'Ave' to Christ's Mother meek—
As children with 'good-morrow' come
To elders in some happy home—
Inviting so the saintly host above,
With our unworthiness, to pray in love,

To pray with us, and gently bear
Our falterings in the pure bright air :
But strive we pure and bright to be
In spirit—else, how vain of thee
Our earnest dreamings, awful Bride—
Feel we the sword that pierced thy side :
Thy spotless lily flower, so clear of hue,
Shrinks from the breath impure, the tongue untrue.

NOTE.

This poem, published after Mr. Keble's death, was during his lifetime withheld from publication, 'with his consent, but against his wish, at the earnest request of some of his dearest friends.' (George Moberly.)

Mary in Relation to the Months

WILLIAM D. KELLY.

FROM 'THE AVE MARIA,' NOTRE DAME, INDIANA, U.S.A., 1887–1891.

I. WITH THE PASSING YEARS: JANUARY.

I

MADONNA mine, the while the fleeting years
In their swift courses come and pass away,
And nearer bring the time when we, like they,
Shall cease to be; when neither hopes, nor fears,
Nor all the love which life to us endears,
Within our bosoms longer wield their sway,
And the stilled pulses of our hearts obey
No more the voice of joy, nor plaint of tears:
Bear with us if we lift our eyes to thee,
Who felt the shortness and the length of life;
Who knew, albeit therefrom thou wast free,
The many snares which in this world are rife,
And ask thee, while our years are yet to be,
For strength to conquer in their ceaseless strife.

II

A LITTLE while, and lo, in flight as swift
As the old year, which faster still and fast
Loses itself within the misty past,
We too shall vanish from men's gaze, and drift
Across that stream whose shadows never lift,
Except to those who have its waters passed:

A few more days, and what we have amassed
For heaven will be the measure of our thrift.
Teach us that wisdom then, Madonna, which
Rates time aright while time still perseveres ;
So that when hence, from our allotted niche,
Death comes to call us unto other spheres,
The deeds which we have wrought may make us rich
Through the whole length of God's eternal years.

II. WINTRY WEATHER IN SPRING-TIME: MARCH.

I

MADONNA—though the whitened meads across
No breath to-day of balmy zephyrs floats,
Nor mirthful melody from feathered throats
Falls from the wayside trees, whose branches toss
Their naked arms above the frozen fosse ;
Albeit, that the gardens and the moats
Beneath the ermine of their winter coats,
Sigh for the flowers and sorrow for their loss—
This sombre season speaks of thee withal.
For in the winds which whistle as they blow,
And in the flakes which eddy as they fall
On the broad bosom of the fields below,
Voices there are which whisper, and recall
The legend of our Lady of the Snow.

II

'HAIL ; Full of grace,' such was the salutation,
Dear Virgin-Mother, that the angel spoke
When the strange greeting of his lips awoke
Thy soul, enrapt in holy contemplation,

From the delights of that sweet meditation
In which it loved to linger and invoke
His aid, who placed on thee a special yoke
That blessèd morn of the Annunciation.
And lo, each spring-time, when the early grasses
Call on the sleeping flowers to show their face,
All the world over, ere the winter passes,
And March to April yields reluctant place,
Thy children honour thee with votive masses,
And, like the angel, hail thee 'Full of grace.'

III. OUR LADY'S MONTH: MAY.

The fairest of the twelve months all—
When, re-awakened by the rain
Of teardrops on their counterpane,
Which April let so softly fall,
And hearkening to the rhythmical
Réveille of the birds' refrain,
In every garden-plot and plain,
The flowers shake off their drowsy thrall,
And open wide their starry eyes—
Is thine, Madonna, thine by right,
Whose beauty is immaculate:
And so, when rivals Paradise
This world which May fills with delight,
Its days to thee we dedicate.

IV. MIDSUMMER—SAINT ANNE: JULY.

I

Mid-month of summer's short and royal reign,
When the soft winds which from the southward blow,
Delight to dally where, as white as snow,
The daisies dapple all the grassy plain;

When its first bloom comes to the ripening grain,
And silken tassels in the corn-fields show ;
When heaven smiles sweetly on all things that grow,
And harvest-time approaches once again ;
What other month could we prefer to thee,
Or what one fitter does the year afford—
Since, with her ever-blest maternity,
Thy days of promise seem in full accord—
To dedicate to her who was to be
The mother of the Mother of the Lord ?

II

Midsummer, and in meadow-lands the lush
Green grasses rippling in the passing breeze,
As dimples the smooth surface of the seas
Which south winds softly with their pinions brush ;
Corn-fields, where, when the feathered songsters hush,
One hears a burst of insect melodies ;
Fruits bending down the branches of the trees,
And wild vines where the ripening berries blush :
Dear mother of the Maid Immaculate,
St. Anne, who bore her who conceiv'd the Lord,
And thus had part in that great act which brought
The world the Saviour it so long had sought ;
This month, with all its promise of reward,
To thy blest motherhood is consecrate.

V. SIGHING, SOUGHING WIND : SEPTEMBER.

September's soughing wind sighs, sad and soft,
Above the meadow-lands, where day by day
To duller tints the hues of green give way ;
And where in lengthened lines, within the croft,

The rifled cornstalks lift their heads aloft,
Like soldiers serried for a coming fray ;
Since they are fled, it chants a funeral lay
For flowers the summer zephyrs kissed so oft.
And yet, despite the breeze by day and night
Which, o'er the meadow-land and in the corn,
Sighs for the flowers and sorrows for their flight,
Until all things around us seem forlorn,
The month, Madonna, has its own delight—
For in September, Mother, thou wast born.

VI. QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS AND MATER MISERICORDIÆ : NOVEMBER.

I

Queen of All Saints, upon this glorious day,
When, upward gazing to the skies, we sing
Their virtues who, by toil and conquering,
Have won admittance to the bright array
Of those blest spirits whose it is for aye
To chant the praises of that mighty King,
Around whose white throne they stand worshipping,
With what beatitude no tongue can say—
Ill were it if we sang no song to thee,
Whose spotless life, free from the least attaints
Of all that sordidness and sin which be
Our common heritage and our complaints,
Won thee, by its surpassing purity,
The glorious title of the Queen of Saints.

II

Madonna, whom the griefs which were thine own,
When Simeon's sword transfixed thy tender heart,
Rendered compassionate, as still thou art,
Of all the sorrows that the world has known ;

Lo, with the wailing winds which sigh and moan,
In these November nights, there seem to start
Sepulchral sobbings from that realm apart,
Where the departed for their faults atone :
Be merciful, Madonna, then, and lend
Thy potent intercession to the plea
We make for those who beg us to befriend
Their hapless helplessness and misery,
That their captivity may sooner end
In blessèd prayer for us, and praise for thee.

VII. TO OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY: ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

In myriad manners are thy praises told :
The suns the circles of their course complete,
And ever hear some tongue thy name repeat ;
The stars, that follow where those orbs have rolled,
Know all the lands and climes thy clients hold ;
The spring's first daisies blossom at thy feet ;
For thee the summer winds are bland and sweet,
And thine its beauty as the year grows old :

And yet perchance, of all the forms and ways
Wherein thy children, wheresoe'er they be,
Delight to voice the volumes of the praise,
Incomparable Queen, they render thee,
None glorifies thee more than his who pays
His orisons upon thy Rosary.

Three Generations of Clients of Mary in Verse: William, Charles and W. H. Kent, O.S.C.

I. HYMN TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

WILLIAM KENT: 1799–1872.

FROM 'THE CATHOLIC MAGAZINE,' 1839.

When daylight on the mountain breaks,
And through the sky, the gorgeous streaks
Of gold and purple richly furled,
Usher the sun into the world;
And nature's sweetest accents raise
In chorus to their Maker's praise:
'Ave, Maria'; Mother blest,
Be thou my Guide, Support and Rest.

When all is bright as summer hours,
And dew-drops hang upon the flowers;
And mists are scattered by the light;
And joyous birds first wing their flight;
And sweet perfume of flowers and trees
Is borne upon the western breeze: 'Ave, Maria.'

When day is past, and shades of night
Fall, like a curtain, on our sight;
And on the wave the moon's bright beams,
Like sheet of burnished silver gleams;
And on the air is softly stealing
The vesper hymn, so full of feeling: 'Ave, Maria.'

Oh, in this spring-time of our years,
When all life's charm so gay appears;
When heart's young thoughts are courted by
The world's allurements, and we fly—
With heedless course—our part to share,
Nor see concealed each dangerous snare: 'Ave, Maria.'

When the scenes change, and lurid sky
Gives warning that the storm is nigh:
And frightened birds fly screaming past,
Seeking safe shelter from the blast;
And clouds in one dark volume roll,
While thunder leaps from pole to pole: 'Ave, Maria.'

When storm-burst breaks with hideous crash,
And lightnings through the black night flash;
And seas in giant billows rise,
Flinging their summits to the skies;
And winds on funeral wing shall sweep
Destruction o'er the mighty deep: 'Ave, Maria.'

When doomed to feel life's heavy gale,
And o'er my blighted hopes bewail;
When friends I prize shall from me sever,
And bands love-formed are burst for ever;
And the bright glow of early years
Is washed away in sorrow's tears: 'Ave, Maria.'

Through all the passing ills of life,
Through friends' neglect, through pain and strife,
Through wreck of fortune, scorn and woe,
Through pangs from breaking hearts that flow,
Through crushed affection's withering blight,
And grief for joys long taken flight: 'Ave, Maria.'

Oh—'Ave, Maria'—be my stay
Throughout this world's uncertain way;

Sweet Mary, while my prayers ascend,
Be thou my Trust, my Hope, my Friend;
O'er life's dark pathway brightly shine
The radiance of thy love divine:
Then, 'Ave, Maria'; Mother blest,
Oh, guide me to eternal rest.

II. STABAT MATER DOLOROSA.

CHARLES KENT.

AFTER JACOPONE DA TODI: XIII. CENT.

FROM 'THE MONTH,' 1875.

STOOD the woe-worn Mother weeping,
Near the cross her station keeping,
While her dying Son was pendent;
Her unsullied soul lamenting,
Sinless, yet for sin repenting,
Riven by the sword resplendent.

Oh, what grief, what dire affliction,
Drowned her life's great benediction,
Mother of the Light Eternal:
What amazement, terror, anguish,
Made her spotless spirit languish,
Seeing quenched that Light Supernal.

Where is he, the man who tearless
Can behold Christ's Mother peerless,
Shadowed by such dread dejection?
Where the heart no grief prostrating,
Christ's dear Mother contemplating,
Mourning with divine affection?

For the sins of others dying,
She beheld him, death defying,
Tortured, rent by scourges gory;

Saw her Own by sweet relation
Breathing forth in desolation
Back to God his Soul of Glory.

Wherefore, Mother, Love's pure Fountain,
Of thy griefs, the o'erwhelming mountain,
Let me feel the weight and sadness:
To thy woes while tears we render,
Let Christ's love, O God of Splendour,
Make our hearts, too, burn with gladness.

Holy Mother, with sweet rigour
My believing heart transfigure
With the signs of crucifying,
Till the wounding it surrounding,
Love abounding, me confounding,
Fill my soul with grief undying.

While my tears with thine are falling
Underneath the rood appalling,
Until life for me is ending:
Near the cross in rapt affliction
Let me share thy dereliction,
Sighs and tears together blending.

Of all virgins Virgin glorious,
Veil not now thy light victorious,
Hear my voice with thine lamenting;
Let Christ's death in mine, poor mortal,
Symbolled be, e'en through death's portal,
Earth his passion still repenting.

Me with nails and spear now wounding,
Drench and drown in blood abounding,
Pouring from Christ's Heart supernal,

Thou, sweet Virgin, my Defender,
Lest in flames my soul surrender
On the Day of Doom Eternal.

Christ, when life and death betide me,
Grant thy Mother then may guide me
To the heavenly palm victorious ;
While my body here shall moulder,
Let my soul be thy beholder,
God, in paradise all glorious.

III. LINES ON THE TRIDUUM, IN HONOUR OF OUR BLESSED LADY,

ORDERED BY POPE LEO XIII. SEPTEMBER 6, 7, AND 8, 1884.

W. H. KENT, O.S.C.

HARK, the Prince whose sceptre reaches
Through the world from south to north,
Who with voice unfailing teaches—
Sends to all an order forth,
Saying, 'Mary's name is slighted ;
Let the wrong at length be righted.'

Every clime and every nation
To their Queen shall now atone,
And for sins make reparation,
Sins of others and their own—
Sins of rebels who reject her,
And of children who neglect her.

Let us, then, to Mary turning,
As she sits enthroned above,
Lift our hearts with earnest yearning,
Show our trust and show our love :
Mother, hear thy children calling ;
Aid the failing, raise the falling.

Thine the love that never faileth,
Love so deep, no tongue may tell ;
Thine the might that still prevaileth
Over all the powers of hell :
Mary, Mother, still befriend us,
And from every foe defend us.

Mother, hear thy children praying
Mid their sorrow and their strife ;
Help the fainting, lead the straying
Back to thee, to light and life ;
Strengthen all the hearts that languish ;
Cheer and soothe the souls in anguish.

See, the land that long delighted
In the shelter of thy name,
Now for centuries benighted—
Mother, come, thine own reclaim :
Come, reclaim thine ancient dower ;
Show thy pity ; show thy power.

Many hearts for truth are yearning,
Drawing nearer to the light :
Mother, speed the feet returning ;
Mary, guide their steps aright :
Hasten, Mother, to their aid ;
Speed the day too long delayed.

Then at length, the daylight, breaking
On the land, shall rise once more ;
Then shall England's heart awaking
Know and love thee, as of yore :
This, the hope our heart has cherished ;
Who hath trusted thee, and perished ?

Provençal Ballad

WRITTEN IN THE DIALECT, BY
A PRIEST OF AIX, IN PROVENCE: 1680.
TRANSLATED BY JOHN KENYON: 1784–1856.

GIPSY CAROL.

FROM 'A DAY AT TIVOLI,' 1849.

FIRST GIPSY.

Gipsies three, Gipsies three ;
Roamers wide o'er field and fell ;
Farers free, where'er we be ;
Such are we, such are we ;
Fortunes, also, we can tell.
Pretty Child, so sweet and mild,
Would you choose your lot to know,
Weal or woe, weal or woe,
Cross our hands, for we can show.
Janan, why a-loitering stand ?
Come and read the Infant's hand.

SECOND GIPSY.

Thou art, thou art, as I can see,
The Equal of the Deity,
His well-belovèd Progeny,
  And born to be adored.
Yea : I can see that thou art he,
Co-partner of the Deity ;
Fore-born for me, fore-born for me,
  Ere chaos felt the Word.
For love it was that gave thee birth ;
Boundless love for all on earth.
With Virgin-Mother—Father, none :
This, all this, in thy palm is shown.

First Gipsy.

Yet still a secret lags behind,
Which Janan hath not cared to tell :
Yet still a secret lags behind,
Which soon shall work its marvel well.
Messiah dear, put here, put here
A silver piece, to make us cheer ;
Then—Janan tells it, Darling dear.

Second Gipsy.

Yet 'mid this bliss, yet 'mid this bliss,
Something of very hard there is,
  For our behoof, to do.
Yea, yea, I wis, 'mid all this bliss,
Something of very hard there is,
  To work our safety through.
That cross, Salvation's cross, I see ;
And if of thy sad martyrie
My tongue the cause may dare to touch,
It is, that thou hast loved too much.

First Gipsy.

But still, at the end of the vital line,
A secret untold remains to divine :
Give again, sweet Babe, thy palm to spell
And a charming secret we can tell :
But first, the tester we must hold ;
Without it nothing can be told.

Second Gipsy.

Thou art God and Mortal too ;
And as such shalt live—not much—
On this earth, our human birth :
Thou art God and Mortal too ;

And being so, full soon shalt go
From thy sojourn here below.
Nought a nature, thus divine,
From eternity can sever ;
Endless life a gift of thine,
And thine essence lives for ever.

First Gipsy.

But dost thou not wish, as fit it is,
We should speak a word to thy Mother dear ;
And in our homely gipsy guise,
Make our compliment to her?
Already, fair Lady, we understand
That a mystery lurks in that beautiful hand.
Do thou, Janan, thou,
Who so well knowest how,
Say a somewhat to pleasure the Lady's ear.

Second Gipsy.

Lady, thou art of royal blood ;
Thy house in glory long hath stood ;
The world hath loftier none.
Thou art, in sooth, of royal blood,
Thy house in glory long hath stood ;
All this to me is known.
Thy Lord—thy Son : thy God—his Father :
What would Blessed Woman rather?
Sainted Daughter of thy Lord ;
Happy Mother of thy God.

First Gipsy.

But thou, old Man, who by the manger
Quietly dost take thy stand,
Let us see, respected stranger,
Let us see and read thy hand.

And think'st thou then, that plotting sly,
We shall steal yon ass that is feeding by?
Old Man, old Man, far better pelf
Would be the Blessed Babe himself.
But first, kind Master, hand your groat,
And let us quench a thirsty throat.

SECOND GIPSY.

I see by that hand, I see full sure,
That thou art great and just and pure;
By that hand dost thou stand full clearly proved
Great and pure and well-beloved.
Husband, wisely mastering sense
With a saint-like abstinence,
Thou to Providence didst bow;
And art thou not rewarded now?

FIRST GIPSY.

But now, sweet Babe, full well we wot
That thou art born with little store;
Thy lot, a naked, lowly lot;
Therefore of pence we talk no more.
And didst thou fear, my Darling dear,
To see the scare-crow gipsy near?
Yet, wherefore start? For, God thou art:
Then, hear our prayer, before we part.

CHORUS OF THE THREE GIPSIES.

If with too much liberty,
We have dared thine ear importune;
If with too much liberty,
We have dared to read thy fortune;
Humbly we pray to thee,
Build thou for us a destiny;
And be it one, Immortal Son,
Blessing us eternally.

Lament of our Lady

I. THE EMBRACING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST BY HIS VIRGIN-MOTHER.

WILLIAM CHATTERTON DIX.

FOUNDED ON A 'LAMENT' (TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK) OF SIMEON METAPHRASTES: IX.-X. CENTS.

FROM 'LYRA MYSTICA,' 1865.

O THOU uncovered Corse, Word of the Living One,
Self-doomed to be uplifted on the bitter tree,
Thereon to die—thy patient will, Eternal Son—
And thence, in love draw all men unto thee.

Which of thy holy members is without a wound?
The thorny wreath thy blessed brow embraces fast;
No place whereon to lay thee, weary head, was found—
But thou shalt rest within a tomb at last.

O lips, which once with sweetest words did overflow,
Fresh from sharp vinegar and bitterness of gall;
O cheeks, how often turned to many a smiter's blow,
And spat upon in Pilate's judgment-hall.

By hands of men made helpless on the dreadful beam,
O hands, of man creative, how were ye pierced through;
Yet all outstretched, ye reach e'en hades to redeem,
And give the first transgressor help anew.

O mouth all sweet, no guile was ever found in thee,
And yet alas, by traitorous kiss wast thou betrayed:
O blessed feet, that walking on the stormy sea,
All water hallowed, as the waves obeyed.

Where is the chorus of thy sick ones, O my Son,
All those infirm whom thou didst heal, the upraisèd dead?
To draw the nails from hands and feet, there came not one
Of all the crowds whom thou hast comforted.

Only came Nicodemus—he who sought by night,
And Joseph kind—whose rocky tomb thy bed shall be,
Whither, to sleep a lion's sleep, in awful might,
My Son, how soon will they be bearing thee.

Now thou art borne to me from yon sharp cross of pain,
And heavily upon these Mother-arms art laid—
These arms which bare thee long ago, and once again
A lowly resting place for thee are made.

I, who first swathèd thee, thy grave-clothes now will bind;
Giver of Life, thou liest dead before me now:
Tears laved thee at thy birth; far hotter tears I find
To wash the death-drops from thy pallid brow.

High in these arms-maternal thou didst leap,
Thou who wast born of me, this weary world to save:
O bitter funerals—that I, who hushed thy sleep,
Must wail this doleful passion o'er thy grave.

II. MOTHER OF SORROWS.

T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R. AND EDMUND VAUGHAN, C.SS.R.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SACRED POETRY OF ST. ALPHONSUS: XVIII. CENT.

FROM 'HYMNS AND VERSES ON SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS,' 1863.

O YE who pass along the way
All joyous, where with grief I pine,
In pity pause awhile and say,
Was ever sorrow like to mine?

See, hanging here before mine eyes,
This Body bloodless, bruised and torn—
Alas, it is my Son who dies
Of love deserving, not of scorn.

For know, this weak and dying Man
Is Son of him who made the earth ;
And me, before the world began,
He chose to give him human birth.

He is my God ; and since that night
When first I saw his infant grace,
My soul has feasted on the light
And beauty of that heavenly face.

For he had chosen me to be
The loved companion of his heart ;
And ah, how that dear company
With love transpierced me like a dart.

And now behold, this loving Son
Is dying in a woe so great,
The very stones are moved to moan
In sorrow at his piteous state.

Where'er his failing eyes are bent,
A friend to help he seeks in vain ;
All, all on vengeance are intent,
And eager to increase his pain.

Eternal Father, God of Love,
Behold, thy Son : ah, see his woe ;
Canst thou look down from heaven above,
And for thy Son no pity show?

But no—that Father sees his Son
Clothed with the sins of guilty men ;
And spares not that Beloved One,
Though dying on his cross of pain.

My Son, my Son, could I at last
Console thee in this hour of death ;
Could I but lay thee on my breast,
And there receive thy parting breath—

Alas, no comfort I impart ;
Nay rather, this my vain regret
But rends still more thy loving heart,
And makes thy death more bitter yet.

Ah, loving souls ; love, love that God,
Who all inflamed with love expires ;
On you his life he has bestowed ;
Your love is all that he desires.

By Frederick George and Elvira Louisa Lee

FREDERICK GEORGE LEE.

I. FISHERMAN'S SONG.

FROM 'THE KING'S HIGHWAY,' 1873.

OVER the crested waves, sun sinking low,
Gliding by ocean's caves, rapid our prow ;
Grey grow the deepening skies, purpling the sea,
Softly our songs arise, Mother, to thee.

Advocate thou art sure, undefiled Dove,
Mother of God, all-pure, thee let us love :
Plead for us, pray for us—trackless the way ;
Kindly words say for us, day after day.

Darker the looming sky, stormier the sea,
Pilgrims, we look on high, Mother, to thee ;

Waiting in faith and love, pure hearts to bring,
Long we to greet above, Jesus, our King.

He is thy Son, and thou gavest him birth ;
He is thy God, and now rules o'er the earth ;
He, as the Son of Man, needed thy care ;
Yet as thy God, he can answer thy prayer.

O'er the wild waters now, darkening and dun,
Swift glides our vessel's prow, long sunk the sun ;
Night is around us black, dangers increase ;
One star points out our track, homeward to peace.

Lead us then, guard us aye, over life's sea,
Unto the perfect day where thou wilt be ;
Songs here are poor and short, comfort nor balm,
Guide us safe into port—heavenly calm.

Lily of Eden, hail ; black grows the night ;
Faith, hope, nor patience fail, waiting the light ;
Plead for us, pray for us, Mother Divine,
Kindly words say for us—Jesus is thine.

Lights flash around his throne, chants ever ring ;
Praising our God alone, Saviour and King ;
Saints and the ransomed stand, Mother, near thee,
Angels in mystic band—nevermore sea.

Gleam the strange lamps of fire, angelic throngs
Make up the heavenly choir, chanting their songs ;
Perfect the peace, and joy never can pall,
Pleasures without alloy—God all in all.

II. OUR LADY OF THE STORM.

FROM 'THE KING'S HIGHWAY,' 1873.

At Cowie, Kincardineshire, high on a rock, close to the sea margin, stand the ruins of an ancient church, under the dedication of 'Our Lady of the Storm,' the churchyard around being still used as a burying-place.

I

WHERE the waves wildly fret and surge for aye,
Old Scotland's children did their Master's will ;
They reared a kirk upon a craggy hill,
That highest worship might ascend each day.
The waves are chanting their eternal song,
The sunshine sleeps upon that lonely hill,
To that bare shrine no crowd of suppliants throng ;
The lights are out—the voices all are still.
Wild storms have been ; but yet, the Evening Star
Hangs lustrous o'er the strange fantastic foam ;
Pledges in gold and crimson come from far
Of brighter weather for a voyage home.
That cross, those lonely graves were once for thee,
Mother of God and Maid, Star of the Sea.

II

A LINGERING remnant garners faithful yet
The morning splendours of that cross-crowned spire ;
Toiling, they know the paths, high still and higher,
Where Peace and Righteousness each other met :
For there God's children sleep round ruined walls,
Where chant the winds a solemn requiem-song,
Where the clouds gather, or the sunshine falls,
Or star-crowns glimmer when the nights are long.
Lord, though the faithless weary grew of thee,
Thy law discarding ; yet these walls are thine,
And this, the passing thousands now may see,
For there once more is reared thy sacred sign.
Storms came ; yet floats the Ark's majestic form—
'Ave, Maria,' Lady of the Storm.

III. THE BELLS OF ST. HUGH'S, PARKMINSTER.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1890.

Across the Sussex lanes and swelling hills,
There ring out bells calling to prayer and praise,
From stately spire, where now God's servants raise
Their intercessions with unselfish wills.
Dear Lady, great Saint Hugh, bear up their hands ;
God's Spirit ever brood above their shrine ;
Our Blessed Lord, in Sacrament Divine,
Bless the poor way-worn of those beauteous lands,
Shedding his grace and mercy over all.
Green are the bright green leaves of wood and wold,
The lilies white and petalled fair with gold ;
Bells chime, or ring, with solemn measured call.
Spring-time is here : God give a fairer spring
For 'Mary's Dower.' So, chime your bells and ring.

ELVIRA LOUISA LEE: 1838–1890.

I. MATER AMABILIS.

FROM 'THE UNION REVIEW,' 1867.

Mother, as if upon thy breast reposing
We, thine own children, ask to sleep this night ;
Now that the day in twilight gloom is closing,
Pray that our God may grant eternal light.

Gabriel of old, with 'Ave,' knelt before thee,
When darkness brooded on the stream of time,
Came the World's Light, when golden gleams fell o'er thee,
Angelic joy-bells rang a ceaseless chime.

Here, low our souls, lone hearts are very weary
With travail sore, and fighting aye with sin ;
Mary, be thou our rest, this world is dreary,
To thy dear bosom take thy children in.

When Jesus his great love for us was showing,
In bitter woe upon the shameful tree,
He every sorrow of his loved ones knowing,
Commended John, sweet Mother, unto thee.

With him then, we would share thy tender keeping,
And pray thee act for us a Mother's part ;
Thy plaint be uttered in the hour of weeping,
And gain the love of Jesus' Sacred Heart.

His voice we love, and heed his gentle guiding ;
We long to follow whither thou art gone,
With God thy Son and thee in bliss abiding,
When life is o'er and all our labour done.

Oh, blessed hope, like morn in lustre breaking,
Vision of peace—a land of light and love ;
Rest after toil for us, in joy awaking
To find our home eternally above.

II. SALUS INFIRMORUM.

Mary, our Mother dear,
Health of the weak,
Sick are our souls with fear—
Jesus we seek :
Dark lower the clouds around,
Sunshine grows dim ;
Safety with thee is found—
Lead us to him.
Oft have we lost the track,
Fierce our dark foe,
Striving to drive us back
While on we go :

Not always strong to fight,
  Weakened by sin,
Lend us thine arm of might—
  Help us to win.
When in our deepest need,
  Sin-scarred, undone,
Gently thy children lead
  Home to thy Son :
He, our Physician kind,
  Easing sore pain,
All our deep wounds shall bind—
  Wash out each stain.
He, our True Food, bestow
  Strength for the way ;
Bring us with thee to know
  Love's perfect day :
Grant us at last a place
  Low at thy feet,
There to behold thy face,
  Mother, most sweet.
There to rejoice at last,
  Tear-stains no more,
Trials and sorrows past,
  Gained now the shore :
There linked in love divine,
  Mother and Son,
Where the lamps burn and shine,
  God, Three in One.

Legend and Ballads

I. MADONNA AND THE RICH MAN.

FRANCESCA ALEXANDER.

A TRANSLATION: FROM 'ROAD-SIDE SONGS OF TUSCANY,' 1885.

SHE is weeping, the Madonna,
She has no bread, nor wine;
She is weeping, the Madonna:
O God, Redeemer, hear
Our Lady of the Rosary,
Our Saviour's Mother dear.

'Go, Lady, to that Rich Man,
And he will give you aid;
Go, Lady, to that Rich Man': O God.

'I have nothing here to give you,
I have neither bread, nor wine;
I have nothing here to give you': O God.

'Give me the broken pieces
That on the plate remain;
Give me the broken pieces': O God.

'I keep the broken pieces,
My dog can live on those;
I keep the broken pieces': O God.

'Twas only three days later,
That Rich Man came to die;
'Twas only three days later: O God.

He at the gate stood knocking,
High at the gate of heaven;
He at the gate stood knocking: O God.

Said Jesus to Saint Peter,
'Who knocks there at the gate?'
Said Jesus to Saint Peter: O God.

'Perhaps it is that Rich Man,
Who would not help the poor;
Perhaps it is that Rich Man': O God.

'Go, let him call his dogs then,
To open him the door;
Go, let him call his dogs then': O God.

He at the gate went knocking,
Low at the gate of hell;
He at the gate went knocking: O God.

The gates of hell were open,
They all were open wide;
The gates of hell were open: O God.

A bed of coals prepare him,
That he may rest thereon;
A bed of coals prepare him: O God.

'Would God to life return me,
I then would help the poor;
Would God to life return me': O God.

The leaf, when once 'tis faded,
Can ne'er grow green again;
The leaf, when once 'tis faded:
O God, Redeemer, hear
Our Lady of the Rosary,
Our Saviour's Mother dear.

II. MELODY AT AVIGNON, 1793.

BESSIE R. PARKES (MADAME BELLOC).

FROM 'THE LAMP,' 1864.

ROBESPIERRE reigned in the Place de Grêve,
And in distant Avignon his word was doom,
When a band of royalists, piously brave,
Were marched to the edge of their gaping tomb:

As they went on their way, they sang—
Tender and full the chorus rang :
'A l'heure suprême, Mère chérie ;
Ora pro nobis, Sainte Marie.'

The maiden young, and the grandsire old,
And the child whose prayers were shortly told,
And the curé, walking side by side
With the baron, whose name was his only pride,
The noble dame and the serving maid—
Neither ashamed, nor yet afraid—
A wonderful sight they were that day,
Singing still, as they went their way : 'A l'heure.'

One of their murderers, waiting nigh,
Heard them singing as they went by,
And smiled, as he felt the edge of his blade,
At the fulness of music their voices made.
'We will stop that melody soon,' said he,
'In spite of their calling on Sainte Marie.'
But one by one, as those voices fell,
The others kept up the chorus well : 'A l'heure.'

When all the victims to death had gone,
And the last sweet music was hushed and done ;
When the pit was filled, with no stone to mark,
And the murderers turned through the closing dark—
One of them wiped his sharp knife clean,
Strode over the soil where the grave had been,
And hummed as he went, with an absent air,
Some notes just caught by his memory there: 'A l'heure.'

And when the thought of that day grew dim
Those obstinate words still clung to him.
He was a man who said no prayers,
But his lips would fashion them, unawares ;

They mixed with his dreams, and started up
To check the curses bred in his cup ;
They wove him round in a viewless net
Of thoughts he could not, though fain, forget,
As he still repeated, again and again,
The ghostly air and the ancient strain : 'A l'heure.'

Thirty years were counted and o'er :
The lilies of France bloomed out once more ;
The grapes which hung on the vines were ripe,
Like the penitent man on the threshold of life ;
When the Angel of Death with healing came
For one who in Lyons had borne no name,
But ' Le Frère d'Avignon,' for many a day ;
Who, living and dying, would hourly say—
'Twas on his lip as he passed away :
'A l'heure suprême, Mère chérie ;
Ora pro nobis, Sainte Marie.'

III. ST. DOMINIC AND THE ROSARY.

THOMAS JOSEPH POTTER: 1827–1873.

A CENTO FROM 'LEGENDS, LYRICS AND HYMNS,' 1862.

THERE is a glorious legend
Of the times now passed away,
Of the times when faith was brighter
Than it is in this our day—
When the hearts of men were keener,
For the things that are above—
For the glory of their Master
And the Mother of his Love.
A darksome cloud had risen
O'er the sweet and smiling earth,
And it fell upon the patriarch
And the infant at its birth :

As it hurried o'er the mountain,
As it rushèd through the glen,
It scattered wide its noxious tide
Among the sons of men.
Error's form was stalking boldly
In the light of God's own sun ;
It was jibing and rejoicing
For the evil it had done :
It stalked along in triumph,
In the might of fire and sword ;
It blighted, with its poisoned breath,
The peasant and his lord.

* * *

A holy monk was praying
In his lone and lowly cell ;
His eye was resting fondly
On a Form he loved right well :
Mary's Image stood before him,
And his face was beaming bright,
As visions floated round him
In the silence of the night.
He saw the wolf devouring
The shepherd and his sheep ;
And his noble breast was panting,
And his eyes were fain to weep :
And the love that burned within him,
For the glory of his King,
Was all too great for human heart,
Too deep for human thing.
He prayed the Virgin-Mother
To raise her mighty arm,
To scatter wide the impious herd,
And shield the flock from harm :

He prayed her, for her glory
And the glory of her Child,
To chase away this hellish foe,
To still this tempest wild.

* * *

A gentle light is floating
Around him as he kneels,
And the gleamings of another world
Within his breast he feels.
A Lady stood before him,
And the beauty of her face
Was such as mortal might not claim—
Too pure for human race :
A gentle Infant nestled
On her pure and spotless breast,
And his little arm was round her,
As he close unto her pressed.
And the light of God shone round them,
As they stood in silence there ;
As they smiled with loving favour
On the hermit at his prayer.
Then the Lady touched him softly
As he lay in holy fear,
And she bade him rise and gird his loins
And be of right good cheer :
For he should be the warrior,
With neither spear, nor sword,
To scatter wide this impious band,
To rout this hellish horde.
'Twas not by earthly weapon
This work was to be done ;
For not by sword, and not by spear,
Are greatest conquests won.

She smiled with heavenly meaning
As a chaplet forth she held ;
And the hermit's heart grew lighter
As his weapon he beheld :
And his breast was almost bursting
As she taught him how to tell
The holy beads, whose potent might
Should rout the ranks of hell.

* * *

The holy monk has issued
From his lone and lowly cell,
And eager ears are listening
For the story he may tell :
Men see God's mark upon him,
As eagerly he pleads,
And tells them of his wondrous gift,
The Holy Virgin's beads.
Quick through the Church's kingdom
The holy practice spread ;
And soon that error's hateful form
Was numbered with the dead :
For it fell away before it,
As the mist before the sun ;
And the preacher and his holy beads
The glorious fight soon won.
Still the Church's children ever,
In their hours of grief and pain,
Unto that holy chaplet turn,
Whose virtues still remain :
'Tis the weapon of their warfare ;
'Tis their armour in the fight ;
And they love it as the ensign
Of their spotless Mother bright.

Ad Beatam Virginem Mariam

POPE LEO XIII.

FROM THE LATIN OF THE HOLY FATHER, 1891.

I

Now that the war is raging, fierce and fell,
And man's relentless foe, with wrath beholding
The sons of God his palaces enfolding,
Full many a form of terror sends from hell:
Fast though they fly love's battle to repel,
Faster, oh, faster, bring thy succours, Mary;
Kind Mother of my youth, like Michael,
With virgin-foot tread down each adversary;
Thou give me strength's invincible accession;
Thou kindle virtue's meekly shining star:
So shall I rise to tyrant-wrong's repression,
And loose the bands of error, near and far:
To the four winds of heaven my foes will flee;
Beneath thy flag I move to victory.

II

Hail, Mary, hail; to hear the word what pleasure:
Hail, Mary, hail; to sing the strain what rest:
It is the gold of Araby the blest—
O my fair Hope, chaste Love, enchanting Treasure;
O my sure Guard—when troubles leave not leisure;
If, as time wanes, my spirit sinks oppressed,
Crushed under cares that know not change, nor measure,
Thou soothe my sorrows on thy mother-breast:
And oh, when near my time for homeward passing,
And my frail vessel almost sights the land,
And my tired eyes their last of earth are glassing,
Thou gently close them with thy holy hand:
Then, as I tread the vale with staff and rod,
Commend my spirit to the hands of God.

Our Lady's Lullaby, Old and New

I. MADONNA'S LULLABY.

ST. ALPHONSUS MARIA DE LIGUORI:
1696–1787.

TRANSLATED BY T. E. BRIDGETT, C.SS.R.
FROM 'HYMNS AND VERSES ON SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS,' 1863.

MARY sings: the ravished heavens
Hush the music of their spheres;
Soft her voice, her beauty fairer
Than the glancing stars appears:
While to Jesus, slumbering nigh,
Thus she sings her lullaby:

'Sleep my Babe, my God, my Treasure,
Gently sleep: but ah, the sight
With its beauty so transports me,
I am dying of delight:
Thou canst not thy Mother see,
Yet thou breathest flames to me.

'If within your lids unfolded,
Slumbering eyes, you seem so fair;
When upon my gaze you open,
How shall I your beauty bear?
Ah, I tremble when you wake,
Lest my heart with love should break.

'Cheeks, than sweetest roses sweeter,
Mouth, where lurks a smile divine—
Though the kiss my Babe should waken,
I must press those lips to mine:
Pardon, Dearest, if I say—
Mother's love will take no Nay.'

As she ceased, the gentle Virgin
Clasped the Infant to her breast ;
And upon his radiant forehead
Many a loving kiss impressed :
Jesus woke, and on her face
Fixed a look of heavenly grace.

Ah, that look, those eyes, that beauty,
How they pierce the Mother's heart ;
Shafts of love from every feature
Through her gentle bosom dart :
Heart of stone—can I behold
Mary's love, and still be cold?

Where, my soul, thy sense, thy reason?
When will these delays be o'er?
All things else, how fair so ever,
Are but smoke : resist no more.
Yes, 'tis done : I yield my arms
Captive to those double charms.

If alas, O heavenly Beauty,
Now so late those charms I learn,
Now at least, and ever, ever
With thy love my heart will burn,
For the Mother and the Child—
Rose and Lily undefiled.

Plant and Fruit, and Fruit and Blossom—
I am theirs and they are mine ;
For no other prize I labour,
For no other bliss I pine ;
Love can every pain requite,
Love alone is full delight.

II. LULLA LULLABY.

WILLIAM BYRD: 1538–1623.

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FROM 'MEDIUS; PSALMS, SONNETS, AND SONGS OF SADNESS AND PIETY,' 1588.

Be still, my Blessed Babe, though cause thou hast to mourn;
Whose Blood most innocent to shed, the cruel king hath sworn.
And lo, alas, behold what slaughter he doth make,
Shedding the blood of infants all, sweet Saviour, for thy sake:
A King is born, they say, which King this king would kill;
Oh, woe and woeful heavy day, when wretches have their will.

Lulla, la lulla; lulla lullaby:
My sweet little Baby, what meanest thou to cry?

Three kings this King of kings to see, are come from far,
To each unknown, with offerings great, by guiding of a star;
And shepherds heard the song, which angels bright did sing,
Giving all glory unto God, for coming of this King:
Which must be made away, king Herod would him kill;
Oh, woe and woeful heavy day, when wretches have their will.

Lo, lo, my little Babe, be still, lament no more ;
From fury shalt thou step aside ; help have we still in store ;
We heavenly warning have, some other soil to seek,
From death must fly the Lord of life, as Lamb both mild and meek ;
Thus must my Babe obey the king that would him kill ;
Oh, woe and woeful heavy day, when wretches have their will.

But thou shalt live and reign, as Sibyls have foresaid,
As all the prophets prophesy, whose Mother yet a Maid,
And perfect Virgin pure, with her breasts shall upbreed
Both God and Man that all hath made, the Son of heavenly seed ;
Whom caitiffs none can 'tray, whom tyrants none can kill ;
Oh, joy and joyful happy day, when wretches want their will.

Lulla, la lulla ; lulla, lullaby :
My sweet little Baby, what meanest thou to cry ?

III. OUR LADY'S LULLABY IN THE DESERT : FROM THE GERMAN.

ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

Holy angels, hovering near me
On your wings of silvery light,
Lo, my Babe is slumbering sweetly
Neath the wind-blown palms to-night :
Hark, they rustle—angels kind,
Hold the branches, calm the wind.

Peace, good palm trees, moaning o'er me,
Beaten by the angry blast ;
Silence, silence—here before me,
See, my Child is slumbering fast :

If his rest ye would not break,
Winds, blow softly for his sake.

On the sand, with weeping weary,
Sleeps the blessèd Little One;
Blustering winds and branches dreary
Must not wake my darling Son:
While the moon resplendent glows,
Peaceful be his sweet repose.

Ah, 'tis vain; the night grows colder;
Nought have I of coverings warm:
Shining angels, waxing bolder,
Come and shield this shivering Form:
Spread your wings with soft plumes lined;
Hold the branches, calm the wind.

IV. SLEEP OF THE INFANT JESUS.

GEORGE NOBLE PLUNKETT.

AFTER ABBÉ LEFEBVRE: FROM 'GOD'S CHOSEN FESTIVAL,' 1877.

On Mary's bosom pillowing his head,
Jesus hath fallen asleep:
That Mother dear, as though he had been dead,
Doth o'er her Infant weep.

She thought: 'My Son, 'tis willed that thou shouldst die,
Slain by the hand of foes':
And then she sang, to haste the moments by,
And charm him to repose.

'You sleep, Child; but your heart a watch doth keep,
And on your tears doth feed;
And from my sword of sorrows, e'en in sleep,
My heart doth ever bleed.

'You sleep: your white hands tenderly recline
Upon your snowy breast;
And mine, that rock your Infancy Divine,
Can never be at rest.

'You sleep; your eyes are closed: they keep their tears
Until the parting days:
And vainly mine, to end our many fears,
To heaven direct their gaze.

'Ah, during his repose how beats his heart
With fear and charity:
Does he behold that keen, accursèd dart,
By which it pierced shall be?

'My God; his brow which gory thorns shall pierce
Soon through and through, behold;
Behold his feet, his hands, which death so fierce
Shall make full quickly cold.

'Angels of heaven, depart; my heart with dread
The sword no longer fears;
But take ye from his heart, turn from his head,
The chalice of his tears.'

* * *

The Child-God on his Mother's bosom slept,
Smiling to hear her voice:
And when of crosses spake she, as she wept,
He did the more rejoice.

Saint Brendan, &c.

DENIS FLORENCE MAC CARTHY:

1817–1882.

FROM 'BALLADS, POEMS, AND LYRICS,' 1850.

AND A SONNET BY HIS DAUGHTER.

I. THE VOYAGE: CANTO III.

'We are informed that St. Brendan, hearing of the voyage of his cousin, Barinthus, in the Western Ocean, and obtaining an account from him of the Happy Isles in the far West, determined, under a strong desire of winning heathen souls to Christ, to undertake a voyage of discovery himself.' (Author.)

We were alone, on the wide watery waste—
Nought broke its bright monotony of blue,
Save where the breeze the flying billows chased,
Or where the clouds their purple shadows threw.
We were alone—the pilgrims of the sea—
One boundless azure desert round us spread;
No hope, no trust, no strength, except in thee,
Father, who once the pilgrim-people led.

And when the bright-faced sun resigned his throne
Unto the Ethiop queen, who rules the night,
Who, with her pearly crown and starry zone,
Fills the dark dome of heaven with silvery light:
As on we sailed beneath her milder sway,
And felt within our hearts her holier power,
We ceased from toil, and humbly knelt to pray,
And hailed with vesper hymns the tranquil hour.

For then, indeed, the vaulted heavens appeared
A fitting shrine to hear their Maker's praise,
Such as no human architect has reared,
Where gems and gold and precious marbles blaze.

What earthly temple such a roof can boast?
What flickering lamp with the rich starlight vies,
When the round moon rests, like the sacred Host,
Upon the azure altar of the skies?

We breathed aloud the Christian's filial prayer,
Which makes us brothers even with the Lord;
'Our Father,' cried we, in the midnight air,
'In heaven and earth be thy great name adored;
May thy bright kingdom, where the angels are,
Replace this fleeting world, so dark and dim.'
And then, with eyes fixed on some glorious star,
We sang the Virgin-Mother's vesper hymn.

Hail, brightest Star, that o'er life's troubled sea
Shines pity down from heaven's elysian blue,
Mother and Maid, we fondly look to thee,
Fair Gate of bliss, where heaven beams brightly through.
Star of the Morning, guide our youthful days,
Shine on our infant steps in life's long race;
Star of the Evening, with thy tranquil rays,
Gladden the aged eyes that seek thy face.

'Hail, sacred Maid, thou brighter, better Eve,
Take from our eyes the blinding scales of sin;
Within our hearts no selfish poison leave,
For thou the heavenly antidote canst win.
O sacred Mother, 'tis to thee we run—
Poor children, from this world's oppressive strife;
Ask all we need from thy immortal Son,
Who drank of death, that we might taste of life.

'Hail, spotless Virgin, mildest, meekest Maid
Hail, purest Pearl that time's great sea hath borne—
May our white souls in purity arrayed,
Shine, as if they thy vestal robes had worn.

Make our hearts pure, as thou thyself art pure ;
  Make safe the rugged pathway of our lives ;
And make us pass to joys that will endure,
  When the dark term of mortal life arrives.'

'Twas thus, in hymns and prayers and holy psalms,
  Day tracking day, and night succeeding night,
Now driven by tempests, now delayed by calms,
  Along the sea we winged our varied flight.
Oh, how we longed and pined for sight of land ;
  Oh, how we sighed for the green pleasant fields ;
Compared with the cold waves, the barest strand—
  The bleakest rock—a crop of comfort yields.

II. MARY'S INTERCESSION.

SISTER MARY STANISLAUS (MAC CARTHY), O.S.D.

FROM 'THE IRISH MONTHLY,' 1886.

Oh, thought to set the coldest heart on fire ;
Oh, thought to cheer the most despondent breast ;
A thousand times within the regions blest—
A thousand times the bright angelic choir
Have heard my name in accents of desire,
To Jesus' ear, by Mary's lips addressed :
And always coupled with some grand request,
Some grace, not all my life-toil could acquire ;
And with such pleading in her voice and eyes,
Persuasive grace, maternal majesty,
That he, who ne'er her slightest wish denies—
Although the boon be far too great for me,
Unworthy as he knows me—he replies,
'As thou dost will, my Mother, let it be.'

Hymn of Alessandro Manzoni
1784–1873.

E. M. CLERKE.

THE NAME OF MARY.

The Spouse of one who toiled for daily wage
In Nazareth, once climbed the mountain slope
To glad the home of her who, in her age,
First knew a mother's hope ;

And greeting her, who in all reverence spoke
A welcome to the unexpected guest,
She, praising God, exclaimed : 'All tribes and folk
For aye shall hail me blest.'

Oh, with what scorn the presage had been heard
By that proud age : oh, futile schemes of man :
Oh, human thought, how widely hast thou erred,
How brief thy vision's span.

We, witnesses how to that word of thine,
The obedient future gave fulfilment sooth—
We, born in love, reared in the school divine
Of the celestial truth—

Mary, we know that he alone made good
The lofty promise from thy lips that came,
Who prompted thy full heart. In reverent mood
Mary, we speak thy name.

'Mother of God,' to us implies that word.
Hail, blessed One : how match such sound benign ?
What dignity on mortal e'er conferred,
Comes near this rank of thine ?

Hail, blessed One : did rudest age e'er shun
To speak a name whose sound doth charm and please?
Where hath it not been taught by sire to son?
What mountains and what seas

Have heard it not? Nor is its fame confined
To elder lands, whose shrines its glories tell ;
The new-found world the Genoese divined,
Hath worshippers as well.

In desert plains, past oceans bleak and wild,
What flowret named in savage tongue doth grow,
That hath not bloomed to deck thine altars mild,
Thy thresholds to bestrow?

O Virgin, Lady dear, all-holy One—
What titles sweet hath every tongue for thee :
Proud nations boast, where'er doth shine the sun,
Thy clients still to be.

Thee, when the day doth dawn and doth decline,
And when the sun doth part its course midway,
Church-bells salute, and give the sacred sign
That all to thee may pray.

When the dark watches of the night appal,
Thy helpful name the timorous child doth sigh ;
To thee, when downward swoops the sudden squall
Do trusting sailors cry.

The sorrowing woman to thy royal heart
Confides the tears despised of man that roll ;
To thee, blest Queen, the woes doth she impart
Of her immortal soul.

To thee, who ne'er a hearing hast denied
To prayers and plaints from every human state,
Unlike the world, whose sympathies divide
The lowly from the great—

To thee, O Blest, who once a grief didst know
That ne'er shall be forgot while time doth last,
E'en yet in daily memory is that woe,
Though centuries have passed.

E'en yet in daily pity hearts are sad
In many lands, while men thy sorrows tell,
And earth of every joy of thine is glad,
As though it late befel.

So great a glory doth the earth award
Unto God's Mother, first in human praise;
To such exalted rank it pleased the Lord
This Hebrew Girl to raise.

O seed of Israel, to dust abased;
O people to long wrath of heaven condemned—
Say, is not she, by us in honour placed,
Sprung from thy stock contemned?

Was David not her sire? and she, the dream
Of all thine ancient seers, O Israel?
Of whom a Virgin's triumph was the theme,
O'er the abyss of hell?

Turn, turn at last: to her your hearts incline,
And be ye saved by her who saveth all;
Nor be there tribe, nor people who decline
With us on her to call.

Hail, to thee, next the Godhead's awful height,
O Rose, O Star, our Hope when threatened most,
Fair as the sun, yet terrible in might
As an embattled host.

Some Middle-Age Verse

I. OF THE ASSUMPTION.

SIR JOHN BEAUMONT: 1582–1628.

DISCOVERED AND IDENTIFIED BY F. G. KENYON.

This poem, with another, cancelled in the edition of the Author's works, in 1629, has lately been found (1890), in a small volume of verse, amongst the Stowe Collection of MSS., formerly in the Ashburnham Library. The book is now in the possession of the British Museum. The old spelling has been followed.

Whoe is shee that assends so high
  Next the heavenlye Kinge,
Round about whome angells flie
  And her prayses singe?

Who is shee that, adorned with light,
  Makes the sunne her robe,
At whose feete the queene of night
  Layes her changing globe?

To that crowne direct thine eye,
  Which her heade attyres;
There thou mayst her name discrie
  Wrytt in starry fires.

This is shee, in whose pure wombe
  Heaven's Prince remained;
Therefore, in noe earthly tombe
  Cann shee be contayned.

Heaven shee was, which held that fire
  Whence the world tooke light,
And to heaven doth now aspire
  Fflames with fflames to unite.

Shee that did soe clearely shyne
When our day begunne,
See, howe bright her beames decline
Nowe shee sytts with the sunne.

II. THE WRECK OF WALSINGHAM:

AN ELEGY OF THE XVI. CENTURY.

CONTRIBUTED BY OSWALD HUNTER BLAIR, O.S.B.

FROM MSS. RAWLINSON, POETRY, FOLIO 16, BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD.

The sacred Image of Walsingham was burnt at Chelsea, in the latter part of 1538; the Elegy was, probably, written shortly after.

In the wrecks of Walsingham
Whom should I choose,
But the Queen of Walsingham
To be guide to my muse?
Then, thou Prince of Walsingham,
Grant me to frame
Bitter plaints to rue thy wrong,
Bitter woe for thy name.

Bitter was it, oh, to see
The silly sheep
Murdered by the ravening wolves,
While the shepherds did sleep.
Bitter was it, oh, to view
The sacred vine,
While the gardeners played all close,
Rooted up by the swine.
Bitter, bitter, oh, to behold
The grass to grow
Where the walls of Walsingham
So stately did show.

Such were the works of Walsingham,
While she did stand :
Such are the wrecks as now do show
Of that holy land.
Level, level with the ground
The towers do lie,
Which, with their golden glittering tops,
Pierced once to the sky.
Where were gates, no gates are now :
The ways unknown
Where the press of peers did pass,
While her fame far was blown.
Owls do shriek, where the sweetest hymns
Lately were sung :
Toads and serpents hold their dens,
Where the palmers did throng.

Weep, weep, O Walsingham,
Whose days are nights :
Blessings turned to blasphemies,
Holy deeds to despites ;
Sin is where our Lady sate ;
Heaven turned is to hell :
Satan sits where our Lord did sway—
Walsingham, oh, farewell.

III. A SINNER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

A FRENCH POEM OF THE XV. CENTURY.

TRANSLATED (1874) *BY JOHN O'HAGAN:* 1822-1890.

QUEEN, by God supremely graced,
Who art placed
Nearest to his throne divine ;
I this morn my path have traced,
Heart-abased,

As a pilgrim to thy shrine,
Saddest supplicant of thine,
Queen benign :
Soul and body low I bend,
Praying that thou wilt incline,
Lady mine,
To be present at my end.

Virgin, merciful and sweet,
Chosen Seat
Of all perfect charity,
As I cast me at thy feet,
I entreat
Grace to turn from vanity :
For alas, my days I see,
As they flee,
Good therein doth nowhere dwell ;
But the watchful enemy,
Tempting me,
Draws me ever down to hell.

Folly, folly still appears
Through my years :
Time all wasted and misspent
All in fruitless hopes and fears,
And in tears
Such as earthly passions vent.
Truly, Virgin, I repent
And lament,
Bringing thee this humble lay,
That thy sweet encouragement
May be bent
Towards me, on my dying day.

Lady, to thy gentleness
I confess,

When my memory reckons o'er
Days of youth and wilfulness,
What excess
Love of passing pleasure bore.
Well it fits me, grieving sore,
To implore
All thy gracious help, that I
May my life of sin deplore
More and more,
Doing penance ere I die.

I am weakest of the weak,
Sooth to speak ;
Since my use of reason grew,
Forward ever, ill to seek,
Ill to wreak,
Crowning ancient sins with new ;
Nor when now they rise to view,
Dark and true,
Know I where my hope to place,
Save to weep, and weep anew,
As I do
In the sight of thy sweet face.

But thou, Fountain fair and clear,
Refuge dear
Unto every soul in pain ;
Queen, whom angel-choirs revere
In the sphere
Where thy Lord and Son doth reign ;
Maidenhood unknowing stain,
Who in vain
Never hast besought thy Child—
Thou with him to plead wilt deign,
And wilt gain
One more sinner reconciled.

Childhood of Immanuel

ARTHUR M. MORGAN, M.A.

FROM 'IMMANUEL,' 1875.

I. ANTICIPATORY: A HOME ASKED.

IMMANUEL, Immanuel, of earth
The Holy and the Mighty asks a home;
Emptied of all save pity he would come,
The Father's Sole-begotten, to our dearth.
Now should we cry among our fields, Woe worth,
Where are white lilies in his path to wait?
Will he, the Everlasting Orb, go forth,
Orient and occident in turn his gate?
Now should the bird who sings so sweet at even
Hush her to hearken 'songs of night' more sweet;
But, when the singer has gone back to heaven,
Songful once more, to him those songs repeat,
While men stand raptured near, and list awhile,
In far-off summer days, in sunset-isle.

II. REALISATION: A HOME FOUND.

IMMANUEL, Immanuel, the word
'Whom shall we send?' has echoed through all years;
Now in time's fulness the response appears,
'Behold, I come to do thy will, O Lord.'
'Whom shall we send?' Like touch-vibrating chord
The Angel of the Presence seeks our shade,
And there in Nazareth, of man abhorred,
Our God asks dwelling of a Mortal-Maid.
'Through thee are one the twain whom sin would sever,
Through thee comes back the gift whence Eva fell;
Ave, Maria, Full of grace for ever,
Thou art the Mother of Immanuel.'
Mother of God, swift answering, 'Let it be,'
For thy meek faith we render, 'Hail,' to thee.

III. SIGHT THROUGH CONTEMPLATION.

WHAT dost thou ponder, Mary, Full of grace,
Thy visitants departed? Dost thou see,
With the clear eyes of thy white purity,
Thy Baby's arms the mighty world embrace?
An artist's gaze may at an easel trace
In faint first lines the masterpiece's power ;
E'en so, perchance, dilates thy dwelling-place,
And breaks in perfect bloom thy passion-flower.
Thus, with the soul it is as with the manger,
In work and word the watchers twain are nigh ;
Again, the Foster-Father guards from danger,
Again, the Mother-Maid sings lullaby ;
True Priest and spotless Bride, that birth they scan,
Immanuel, Eternal God with Man.

IV. REVELATION IN DREAMS.

THERE are who in the night lie down to slumber,
And, waking, joy to know their grief a dream ;
There are who wake and work beneath the gleam,
Yet, sleep—such phantasies their noonday cumber.
There is who, coming in the midnight sombre,
Tells men of heaven beneath the clouds begun,
And bids them sorrows with their dreams to number,
Which fade, and fading, bring to them the sun.
Sleep, sleep, O Joseph ; thou didst dream while waking,
Thou in thy slumber things of day shalt hear ;
The star of morning says the sun is breaking,
The angel speaks the King of angels near.
O Foster-Father, guard thy household well—
The Ever-Maiden, the Immanuel.

V. STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS.

Mother of Jesus, with thy sweet hand guiding
Thy Little One along the Libyan plain,
Dost mark how tottering falls each idol fane,
Eternal God in Egypt's midst abiding?
To human eyes from Herod's anger hiding,
A puny train along the sands ye go ;
Yet, conquering and to conquer, God is riding,
With coronal of stars and horse of snow.
Ye also, Foster-Father, Mother-Maiden,
Attendants of his march, save you, seem none,
But babes, just gone from Bethlehem to Eden,
The martyrs' noble army, crowned, forerun ;
Their cross, as men count years, love's cross before,
They bid the weeping mother weep no more.

VI. PURIFICATION OF THE STAINLESS.

Meseems the Church is as her Heavenly Spouse ;
No past and future in her time may be ;
The tender smile of her first infancy
Still, after many ages, lights her brows.
Come, pilgrims, hasten to the holy house,
And bend and praise. Before the earth-set throne,
A lowly Mother seals her travail-vows,
Nor renders thanks and offers gifts alone ;
For, round her thanks are thankful voices ringing,
The thankful voices of the first Nowell,
And aye her soul is 'Nunc dimittis' singing,
Because her eyes have seen Immanuel ;
The Mother purified, who stain has none,
Offering in earthly shrine the Eternal Son.

VII. WISDOM'S MANSION.

HAST thou the pleasant path of Wisdom missed?
Oh, while the time is, seek her sorrowing;
Men from the ocean pearls of price up bring,
Men rive the earth for gold and amethyst;
They who find Wisdom only bend and list;
Once she was far away beyond all ken;
But righteousness and peace in Jesus kissed,
And now the Wisdom sets her chair with men.
Not to the world she makes her strange expansion,
Not with thy friends and kinsfolk walks she one;
Mary and Joseph, where is Wisdom's mansion?
'Teaching the wise, we found our twelve-year Son;
Go to the Father's house, as we of yore,
And dwell with Wisdom—wise for evermore.'

VIII. CONSUMMATION.

IMMANUEL, Immanuel, my flowers—
My little children, now is Childhood done;
My intonation and my cadence one,
Immanuel, I sing with all my powers;
Immanuel, in dark or sunny hours,
Immanuel, be comfort far or nigh,
Immanuel, in sweet or songless bowers,
Immanuel, I carol till I die;
Immanuel, God with us in his meekness;
Immanuel, God with us in his might—
To bind our wounds, to gift with strength our weakness,
To bring us, angels, to the home of light.
The Son of Mary, he our world has trod;
Now, thanks and glory to the Child, our God.

Motherhood: an Ode

LEWIS MORRIS.

FROM THE 'ODE OF PERFECT YEARS,' 1880.

But here is one who over all the earth
Is worshipped and is blest,
Who doth rejoice from holier springs of mirth,
And sorrow from a deeper fount of tears,
On whose sweet bosom is our earliest rest,
Whose tender voice that cheers
Is our first memory, which still doth last
Through all our later past—
The love of love, or child, the world-worn strife,
The turmoil and the triumphs of a life—
The sweet Maid-Mother, pure and mild,
The deep love undefiled.

Thou art the universal praise
Of every human heart, the secret shrine
Where seer and savage keep a dream divine
Through growing and declining days ;
And, but for thee
And thy unselfish love, thy sacrifice,
Which brings heaven daily nearer to our eyes,
Men whom the rude world stains, men chilled with doubt,
Would find no ray of Deity
To fire a faith gone out.

Our life from a twofold root
Springs upwards to the sky,
One, surface only, shared with tree and brute,
And one, as deep and strong as heaven is high.
Spirit and sense,
Each bears its part and dwells in innocence ;

Yet only grown together can they bear
The one consummate fruit.
The flower is good, the flower is fair,
But holds no lasting sweetness in its petals thin,
No seed of life within.
But the ripe fruit within its orbèd gold
Doth hidden secrets hold ;
Within its honied wells, set safe and deep,
The future lies asleep.
Of shamefastness our being is born—
Of shamefastness and scorn.

Oh, wonder, that so high dost soar :
Oh, vision, blest for evermore :
With every throe of birth
Two glorious Presences make glad the earth—
The Stainless Mother and the Eternal Child.
Of the heart comes love, of the heart and not the brain ;
To heights where thought comes not can love attain :
We cannot tell at all, we may not know,
How to such stature high our lower natures grow ;
What strong instinctive thrill
The Mother's being doth fill,
And raises it from miry common ways,
Up to such heights of love.
We cannot tell what blessed forces move,
And so transform the careless girlish heart
To bear so high a part.
We cannot tell ; we can but praise.

Fair Motherhood, by every childish tongue
Thy eulogy is sung.
In every passing age
The theme of seer and sage :
The painters saw thee in a life-long dream ;

The painters, who have left a world more fair
Than ever days of nymph and goddess were—
Blest company, who now for centuries
Have fixed the Virgin-Mother for our eyes—
The painters saw thee sitting, brown or fair,
Under the Tuscan vines, or colder northern air ;
They saw pure love transform thy peasant gaze ;
They saw thy reverent eyes, thy young amaze,
And left thee Queen of Heaven, wearing a crown
Of glory ; and abased at thy sweet breast,
Spurning his robes of kingship down,
The Child-God laid at rest.

They found thee, and they fixed thee for our eyes ;
But, every day that goes
Before the gazer, new Madonnas rise.
What matter, if the cheek show not the rose,
Nor look divine is there, nor queenly grace ?
The mother's glory lights the homely face.
In every land beneath the circling sun
Thy praise is never done.
Whatever men may doubt, they put their trust in thee ;
Rude souls and coarse, to whom virginity
Seems a dead thing and cold.
So always was it, from the days of old ;
So shall it be, while yet our race doth last ;
Though truth be sought no more and faith be past,
Still, till all hope of heaven be dead,
Thy praises shall be said.

Aye, thou art ours, or wert, ere yet
The loss we ne'er forget,
The loss which comes to all who reach life's middle way,
We see thee by the childish bed
Sit patient all night long,

To cool the parching lips, or throbbing head ;
We hear thee still with simple song,
Or sweet hymn lull the wakeful eyes to sleep ;
Through every turning of life's chequered page,
Joying with those who joy, weeping with those who weep.
Oh, sainted love : oh, precious sacrifice :
Oh, heaven-lighted eyes.
Blest dream of early youth ; best memory of age.

Shadow of the Star, &c.

GERARD MOULTRIE, M.A.: 1829–1885.

FROM 'LYRA MESSIANICA,' 1864.

I. SHADOW OF THE STAR.

SABÆAN odours load the air ;
  See myrrh, as though for burial brought ;
The flash of royal gold is there ;
  But where is he for whom 'tis sought ?
Behold him, on the Spotless Virgin's knee,
The Priest, the Man, the Monarch—lo, 'tis he.

Mother of God, the eastern star
  Shines brightly on the humble shed
Where wise Chaldæans, led from far,
  Bend low before the Infant Head ;
The priestly arms spread forth to bless e'en now ;
Stedfast to win the crown by death, the brow.

Mother of Sorrows, mark the word,
  And ponder it within thy heart—
Through thine own soul shall pierce the sword
  Ere God full knowledge shall impart ;
Then shalt thou see, with re-awakened eye,
The signs worked out of the Epiphany.

Upon the great Good Friday morn,
Thy Son in royal guise shall stand
With purple robe, and crown of thorn,
And sceptred reed in his right hand :
When these things come to pass, look up ; behold
The first great sign worked out—the gift of gold.

When priestly arms on Calvary's crest
In intercession wide are spread,
And to that blessing from their rest,
Hades sends forth the sainted dead,
The second gift behold—see heavenward rise
Atoning incense of the sacrifice.

The Soul has fled ; the vexed limbs sleep ;
O'er both the Godhead spreads its span :
Bring myrrh and spices ; vigil keep
Over the Archetypal Man :
With eyes of awful love and bated breath,
Lady, behold the myrrh—the type of death.

* * *

In mystic number, vested white,
The presbyters around the Throne
Cast down their crowns of golden light,
Their Maker and their Lord to own ;
'For he is worthy of all praise,' they sing,
'Of heaven and earth Creator, Lord, and King.'

Unchangeable the priesthood's vow,
Which this Man, pure from human stain,
Yet Man in all things, offers now—
Himself for sin the Victim slain.
At last the threefold gifts in one concur ;
Here blend the gold, the frankincense, the myrrh.

II. MARY AT CANA OF GALILEE.

FROM 'HYMNS AND LYRICS,' 1867.

In silent thought
He sate beside the Mother ; and around
The revellers were merry, thinking nought
Of him : and high the sound
Of mirth and happiness and festal glee
Rose from the village hall of humble Galilee.

She gazed on him ;
And knew that, underneath that fragile frame,
The God who sits between the cherubim,
Girded about with flame,
Restrained his swelling Godhead, in the hem
Of that weak fleshly garb revealed at Bethlehem.

She watched his eye ;
And saw it kindle when the wine ran low ;
As oft-times at her breast in infancy,
In still and steady glow,
Her God had gazed on her from that calm face,
And eye to eye her soul refreshed its stores of grace.

'Tis not yet come,
Woman, mine hour, when I must tread alone
The wine-press of my vintage. Though my home
I leave to seek mine Own,
The Woman's Seed, ere ripened, must abide
The resurrection Sun of God's warm Easter-tide.'

'Fill full the cup' :
And the thin water blushes into wine,
To find its meaner substance brimming up
Round the creative Vine ;

And the low whisper steals around the board :
'Our Guest is God ; 'tis our Creator ; 'tis the Lord.'

NOTE.

No. II., Line 12 : By accident, probably caused by a misprint of the original, a term historically inexact appeared here ; it has been replaced by a word which conveys the author's meaning.

'Vagrant Verses'

ROSA MULHOLLAND (MRS. JOHN T. GILBERT).

FROM 'THE IRISH MONTHLY'; AND 'VAGRANT VERSES,' 1886.

I. NORAH'S LILIES.

'Norah, little Norah ; whither art thou hieing?'
Keep the sad voices of the winds calling eerily.
'Aha ; for the water, for the blue shining water'—
Rings out the answer from her glad heart cheerily.

Still snatching wildly at her curly brown locks streaming—
'Linger on the heath awhile and revel with us merrily.'
'Hie ; for the lilies, for the white floating lilies'—
Leaping from the clinging of their light hands airily.

'Tarry, little maiden, the waxen cups come drifting'—
Dragging in terror at her light flowing drapery.
'Oh, they are for Mary ; and the dawn-star is fading ;
Morn is breaking o'er the hills, pallid and vapoury.'

'Tarry, little Norah ; thou wilt drown unless thou tarry ;
We will blow the flowers, so thou mayst grasp them easily.'
'They must be on the altar, at Mary's feet, ere sunrise'—
Stretching o'er the margin of the lake curling breezily.

Rest thee, little maiden, thou art drifting mid the lilies,
Down among the lilies with thy dead eyes closed dreamily,
Clasping to thy bosom all the snowy waxen blossoms,
While upon thy pallid face the sun shines beamily.

'Norah, little Norah; it is sunrise on the mountains'—
Wail the sad voices of the winds calling drearily:
'Mary wears the lilies in her diadem in heaven'—
Weird echo answers, through the mist falling eerily.

II. AFTER THE STORM.

Mary most Pure, walking in highest heaven
Among the blossoms of the starry meadows,
And looking down into our earthly shadows,
Heard a sad soul that asked to be forgiven.

Pausing, she listened to the piteous story:
Then said she, 'I will have for my handmaiden
This weary soul with sorrow overladen,
And I will robe her in eternal glory.'

Behold, the eager angels hastening
Where death and Satan hover o'er their prey,
While sin and poverty are standing by.

For each his own, and none will dare deny
To death and poverty the worn-out clay:
Wake, happy soul, and spread thy trembling wing.

III. AVE, MARIA.

Come, run with me, O stalwart youth and maiden
And run with me, O children, young and fleet;
And even ye, with years so heavy-laden,
Now struggle yet to use your failing feet.

Come, crowding forth from all the lanes and alleys ;
  Come, hurrying out from all the fields and woods ;
And make your paths in all the pathless valleys,
  And leave your tracks on all the trackless floods.

For unto earth has come a mighty Wonder,
  And sweeter words are uttered now by God,
Than when of old he spake to us in thunder,
  And scourged the faithless nations with his rod.

Oh, come and see the Lily he has planted—
  Eve's fairer Daughter, blooming in the land ;
And make again the prayers that he has granted,
  And ask the world's redemption at his hand.

For lo, the stars, in heaven's serenest story,
  Are grouped to crown this Womanhood sublime ;
And lo, the sun has woven of his glory
  A robe to be her raiment for all time.

Oh, come and see a Spotless Virgin kneeling ;
  Oh, come and hear an angel at her side ;
The earliest tidings of our joy revealing—
  The herald of the glorious Christmas-tide.

Come here, for this is Mary and no other,
  And she will nurse the Lord upon her knee ;
And Jesus will bequeath her as a Mother
  To us upon the cross of Calvary.

Then let us run and greet her with the angel :
  'Ave, Maria ; give to us thy Son' :
O'er all the earth ring out the loud evangel—
  The gates of hell are closed, and heaven is won.

On Pictures by Murillo

I. LINES ON A PICTURE AT MADRID, BY MURILLO.

RICHARD CHENEVIX TRENCH:
1807–1886.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1885.

With what calm power thou risest on the wind;
Mak'st thou a pinion of those locks unshorn?
Or of that dark-blue robe which floats behind
In ample folds? Or art thou cloud-upborne?

A crescent moon is bent beneath thy feet;
Above, the heavens expand, and tier o'er tier
With heavenly garlands thy advance to greet,
The cloudy throng of cherubim appear.

There is a glory round thee, and mine eyes
Are dazzled, for I know not whence it came;
Since, never in the light of western skies
The island-clouds burned with so pure a flame.

Nor were those flowers of our dull common mould,
But nurtured on some amaranthine bed,
Nearer the sun, remote from storms and cold,
By purer dews and warmer breezes fed.

Well may we be perplexed and sadly wrought,
That we can guess so ill what dreams were thine,
Ere from the chambers of thy silent thought
That face looked out on thee, Painter divine.

What innocence, what love, what loveliness,
What purity must have familiar been
Unto thy soul, before it could express
The holy beauty in that visage seen.

And so, if we would understand thee right,
And the diviner portion of thine art,
We must exalt our spirits to thine height—
Nor, wilt thou else the mystery impart.

II. LINES ON MURILLO'S PICTURE, 'THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.'

AUBREY DE VERE.

FROM 'THE MONTH,' 1884; REVISED, 1892.

The picture which suggested this poem is in the church of the Sacred Heart, at Bournemouth, to which it was presented by the late Count de Torre Diaz, to whose memory this poem is inscribed.

'A SIGN was seen in heaven: a Woman stood;
Beneath her feet the moon.' That waning moon
'Neath yonder pictured apparition curved,
Is time there dying with his dying months:
The Spirit showed that vision to Saint John,
Exiled in Patmos Isle. The best beloved
Deserved such solace best.

She stands in heaven:
Not yet the utmost mountain-peaks of earth,
Forth from the hoary deep unlifted still,
Have felt her foot's pure touch. A cloud from God,
On streaming like a tide, thus far hath borne her
To the threshold only of the house of man:
Angelic heads and wings beneath her gleam,
And lily and rose and palm. Her knee is bent:
Her moon-like face is tearful with great awe:
Her universe is God, and other none;
Piercing all worlds her gaze is fixed on him:
She waits his will supreme.

Men of good-will,
Draw near in faith, honouring the mystery :
The sunrise of your wondrous world of faith
Was when the angel spake, and at his word,
Mary believed. Its noon was Pentecost,
Then, when the Church of God stood up, sun-clad
By him, the ascended Sun of Righteousness.
This is not noon, nor sunrise. This is dawn :
The aurora of the spiritual heaven and earth—
Then, when the hour of consummation comes
For them alone material worlds shall be ;
Their glory shall but be this pledge fulfilled ;
Their loveliness shall be but hers writ large ;
Their fruitfulness, the type of hers : her life,
When time is ripe, shall be a music-strain
Tuning all harmonies of time ; itself
An echo through the centuries prolonged
From this first bird-note clear.

The painter's hand
Wrought well. Yon robe glitters, a pearl of dawn ;
Yon purple scarf blown back by her advance
Is dark with dews and shades of vanquished night ;
The raised hands, upward pointing from that breast,
Are matutinal with some heavenlier beam
Than streaks our east. That sunless mist behind her
Wins but from her its glow.

Oh, young fair face—
For though that Form to Maiden-graciousness
Hath reached, the face is maiden less than child,
Or both in one, an earlier mystery,
Precursor of that Maiden-Motherhood
Which blends two gifts divine. Child-Prophet soft—

What thoughts are hers? He only knows who sends
them.
From him they come; to him, once more ascend.
Child-Prophet sad; feels she the destined weight
Of crowns and sceptres, and the wide earth's praise,
Honouring earth's humblest? She that would be nought,
Must she be Queen of all?
Not yet; not yet;
Ere comes that day she must be Queen of Woes.
This, this is the beginning, not the end;
A world redeemed must be a world sin-marred:
That world as yet exists not. This is she
Through whom, though man had never fallen, his God
Then too had dwelt with Man—so taught the Seer—
Not victim, but triumphant. Sleep, O Eve,
Thy Daughter's foot—yon picture veils, yet shows it—
Thy Daughter's foot, 'the Woman's,' the Foretold,
Whose sacred Seed, 'the Woman's Seed,' through her
Shall bruise the serpent's head, not yet subdues it:
Not yet that moon she treads hath gazed on guilt:
Transience is not transgression. High in spheres
No autumn ever touched, the Tree of Life
Stands; and close by, as pure, the Tree of Knowledge:
The twain commix their lights; the twain are one.
All yet is archetypal: all is healing:
Not yet, the fruit is plucked: not yet, God's frown
Makes Eden dark.
I raise mine eyes once more.
That breeze which onward wafts her, sucked the flowers
Which pave the summits of the Hills of God.
The 'Hills of God.' He sang them well, that bard
Great-hearted, who for love of Christ preferred
The priestly vestment to the singing robe;
Whose monument this day stands consummate.

Thus taught he, God's decrees his arduous theme :
Thus sang he—song severe, not winged by verse—
'High on the summits of the Hills of God,
There spreads a table-land immeasurable ;
Not cherub's eye can grasp it ; seraph's flight
Reach its remoter verge. Across it moves,
Alone, the ordered march of God's decrees,
From infinite distance on to infinite :
Their birth-place no man knows.' Methinks I see them,
A cloudy pageant of advancing gods,
With feet which tread that shadowy stage, nor less
With vans outstretched winnowing the air. A breath
Strikes on my brow ; and strains I hear, like sighs
Of seas round coasts far distant.

Child of Heaven,
The First-born, save thy Son, in those decrees,
The Elect, the Immaculate, the Full of grace
Which, for that Son's sake, fenced thee from his foe ;
Foam-born from seas of sanctity alone ;
Tested in all the sanctities of God,
And borne—that six days' work as yet unwrought—
Above the heaving crests of things to be,
A Gift predestined, but a Gift reserved ;
Say, must that foot which treads yon waning orb,
Descend one day to earth? It will not catch
Her taint ; but where it treads, those other feet
Will leave ensanguined prints—the Feet of God.

NOTES.

No. II. Line 77 : That bard ; Father Faber. Line 80 : Whose monument ; The allusion here is to the recently opened (1884) Church of the London Oratory. Line 86 : Thus sang he ; This thought is to be found in one of Father Faber's prose works. (Author.)

Nineteenth Century Tribute

I. LADY OF THE PASSION.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING: 1809–1861.

AFTER JOHN, METROPOLITAN OF EUCHAITA: XI. CENTURY.

FROM 'THE GREEK CHRISTIAN POETS,' 1863.

O Lady of the Passion, dost thou weep?
What help can we then through our tears survey,
If such as thou a cause for wailing keep?
What help, what hope, for us, sweet Lady, say?
'Good man, it doth befit thine heart to lay
More courage next it, having seen me so.
All other hearts find other balm to-day—
The whole world's consolation is my woe.'

II. PART OF VALENCE'S SPEECH TO THE YOUNG DUCHESS.

ROBERT BROWNING: 1812–1889.

FROM ACT II. 'COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY,' 1844.

There is a Vision in the heart of each
Of justice, mercy, wisdom, tenderness
To wrong and pain, and knowledge of its cure;
And these, embodied in a Woman's Form
That best transmits them, pure as first received,
From God above her to mankind below.

III. THE 'AVE' HOUR.

GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON: 1788–1824.

Written between 1819 and 1822.

'Ave, Maria'; o'er the earth and sea,
That heavenliest hour of heaven is worthiest thee.

'Ave, Maria'; blessed be the hour,
The time, the clime, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day-hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet, the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.

'Ave, Maria'; 'tis the hour of prayer;
'Ave, Maria'; 'tis the hour of love;
Ave, Maria'; may our spirits dare
Look up to thine and to thy Son's above;
'Ave, Maria'; oh, that face so fair;
Those down-cast eyes beneath the Almighty Dove—
What though 'tis but a pictured image strike,
That painting is no idol—'tis too like.

IV. THE VIRGIN'S CRADLE-HYMN.

SAMUEL T. COLERIDGE: 1772–1834.

Translated (1798) from the Latin lines placed beneath a print of the Virgin and Child in the Inn of a village in Germany. (Author.)

Sleep, sweet Babe, my cares beguiling;
Mother sits beside thee smiling;
Sleep, my Darling, tenderly.
If thou sleep not, Mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth;
Come, soft slumber, balmily.

V. THE BLADE OF GRASS.

DORA GREENWELL: 1821–1882.

FROM 'CAMERA OBSCURA,' 1876.

Thy own soul a sword shall pierce. St. Luke ii. 35.

O LITTLE blade of grass,
  A little sword thou art,
That, in thy haste to pass,
  Hast pierced thy Mother's heart.
O little blade of grass,
  A little tongue thou art
Of cleaving flame—alas,
  Thou hast cleft thy Mother's heart.
O little blade, upcurled
  Leaf, sword, or fiery dart,
To win thy Father's world
  Thou must break thy Mother's heart.

VI. CHRISTMAS-EVE HYMN: FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

EDWARD VAUGHAN KENEALY: 1819–1880.

FROM 'LYRA MESSIANICA,' 1865.

THERE comes a Galley laden—
  A heavenly Freight on board—
It bears God's Son, the Saviour,
The great undying Word.
And proudly floats that Galley
  From troubled coast to coast;
Its sail is Love and Mercy,
  Its mast the Holy Ghost.

Now earth hath caught the anchor,
The Ship hath touched the strand,
God's Word in fleshly garment,
The Son steps out on land.
Thou Bethlehem, the lowly,
Receiv'st him in thy stall,
Thou giv'st him rest and shelter,
Who comes to save us all.

VII. FROM 'THE GOLDEN LEGEND: A MIRACLE PLAY.'

H. W. LONGFELLOW: 1807–1882.

I. PRINCE HENRY'S SOLILOQUY.

This is indeed the Blessed Mary's land,
Virgin and Mother of our dear Redeemer.
All hearts are touched and softened at her name;
Alike the bandit, with the bloody hand,
The priest, the prince, the scholar and the peasant,
The man of deeds, the visionary dreamer,
Pay homage to her as one ever present.
And even as children, who have much offended
A too indulgent father, in great shame,
Penitent, and yet, not daring unattended
To go into his presence, at the gate
Speak with their sister, and confiding wait
Till she goes in before and intercedes;
So men, repenting of their evil deeds,
And yet, not venturing rashly to draw near
With their requests an angry father's ear,
Offer to her their prayers and their confession,
And she for them in heaven makes intercession.

And if our faith had given us nothing more
Than this Example of all Womanhood,
So mild, so merciful, so strong, so good,
So patient, peaceful, loyal, loving, pure—
This were enough to prove it higher and truer
Than all the creeds the world had known before.

II. URSULA TO OUR LADY.

Virgin, who lovest the poor and lonely,
If the loud cry of a mother's heart
Can ever ascend to where thou art,
Into thy blessed hands and holy
Receive my prayer of praise and thanksgiving.
Let the hands that bore our Saviour bear it
Into the awful presence of God ;
For thy feet with holiness are shod,
And if thou bearest it, he will hear it.

VIII. HYMN EIGHT : BY NOVALIS—G. F. P. VON HARDENBERG : 1772–1801.

HELEN LOWE.

FROM 'THE PROPHECY OF BALAAM,' 1841.

In many a form I see thee oft,
O Mary, beauteously portrayed ;
But never with such semblance soft
As to my soul thou cam'st arrayed.
I only know, the world's annoy,
Since then, like transient dream doth fade,
And an eternal heaven of joy
My spirit hath its dwelling made.

IX. MARY, STAR OF THE SEA.

THOMAS MOORE: 1779–1852.

FROM 'EVENINGS IN GREECE,' 1825.

When evening shades are falling
O'er ocean's sunny sleep,
To pilgrims' hearts recalling
Their home beyond the deep;
When rest, o'er all descending,
The shores with gladness smile,
And lutes, their echoes blending,
Are heard from isle to isle:
Then, Mary, Star of the Sea,
We pray, we pray to thee.

The noon-day tempest over
Now ocean toils no more,
And wings of halcyons hover
Where all was strife before;
Oh, thus may life, in closing
Its short tempestuous day,
Beneath heaven's smile reposing,
Shine all its storms away:
Thus, Mary, Star of the Sea,
We pray, we pray to thee.

X. VIRGIN AND CHILD.

GEORGE MORINE: 1809–1872.

Hail, Sovereign Lady, evermore adored
In heaven above, and honoured upon earth;
Most blessèd among women for the birth
Thou gavest to that Child, our Saviour-Lord.

To thee the nations turn with glad accord,
Confess thy name and celebrate thy worth ;
Singing full choruses of holy mirth,
To thee chaste Mother of the Incarnate Word.
O Blessed Lady, by thy love divine
To that meek Child, so wonderfully shown
When sorrow stained his cheeks with blood and brine,
And sins of others bore his body down—
Adopt all humankind, who droop and pine
In sin-born sorrow that is all their own.

XI. A HYMN.

EDGAR ALLAN POE: 1811–1849.

At morn, at noon, at twilight dim,
Maria, thou hast heard my hymn :
In joy and woe, in good and ill,
Mother of God, be with me still.
When the hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee.
Now, when storms of fate o'ercast
Darkly my present and my past,
Let my future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine.

XII. HYMN OF ELLEN DOUGLAS.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.: 1771–1832.

FROM 'THE LADY OF THE LAKE,' CANTO IV.

'Ave, Maria' ; Maiden mild—
Listen to a maiden's prayer ;
Thou canst hear though from the wild,
Thou canst save amid despair.

Safe may we sleep beneath thy care,
Though banished, outcast and reviled—
Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer ;
Mother, hear a suppliant child.
'Ave, Maria.'

'Ave, Maria' ; Undefiled—
The flinty couch we now must share
Shall seem with down of eider piled,
If thy protection hover there.
The murky cavern's heavy air
Shall breathe of balm, if thou hast smiled—
Then, Maiden, hear a maiden's prayer ;
Mother, list a suppliant child.
'Ave, Maria.'

'Ave, Maria' ; Stainless styled—
Foul demons of the earth and air,
From this their wonted haunt exiled,
Shall flee before thy presence fair.
We bow us to our lot of care,
Beneath thy guidance reconciled—
Hear for a maid a maiden's prayer ;
And for a father hear a child.
'Ave, Maria.'

XIII. ALMA VIRGO.

AGNES STRICKLAND : 1796–1874.

A paraphrase, rendered whilst Persiani was singing the hymn at St. Mary's, Moorfields, July 25, 1840.

Blessed Mother, Maid divine,
Raise to thee this heart of mine ;
Fill with heavenly warmth my frame,
Bid my soul ascend in flame,
In eternal jubilee,
Singing evermore with thee, Alleluia.

Odes and Sonnets: Personal

I. SONNET: FOR HERSELF.

VITTORIA COLONNA: 1490–1547.

TRANSLATED (1880) *BY WILLIAM H. EYRE, S.J.*

VIRGIN most Pure, who never knewest night,
Living within the true Sun's deathless day,
The golden gleam of which, through all thy way,
Made glad thy beauteous eyes, with joyous light:
With thee the God-Man dwelt, when angels bright
Lit up his lowly home with lustrous ray,
And filled with awe, pleased homage sought to pay,
Yearning his will to work, be what it might.
Thou, the Eterne, veiled by our human screen,
As Lord didst fear; didst cherish as thy Son;
Didst love as Spouse; as Father didst adore.
Pray that my troubled stream of life may run
Back to its happy Source; and Heaven's great Queen,
Thy Mother-love show me too ever more.

II. ODE ON THE DEATH OF CRASHAW,

A convert who died, of a fever, a canon of Loretto, in 1649.

ABRAHAM COWLEY: 1618–1667.

POET and Saint, to thee alone are given
The two most sacred names of earth and heaven,
The hard and rarest union which can be,
Next that of Godhead with humanity.
Long did the Muses banished slaves abide,
And built vain pyramids to mortal pride:
Like Moses thou (though spells and charms withstand)
Hast brought them nobly home, back to their Holy Land.

Ah, wretched we, poets of earth ; but thou
Wert, living, the same poet which thou art now :
Whilst angels sing to thee their airs divine,
And joy in an applause so great as thine ;
Equal society with them to hold,
Thou need'st not make new songs, but say the old.
And they (kind spirits) shall all rejoice to see,
How little less than they exalted man may be.

* * *

Thy spotless muse, like Mary, did contain
The boundless Godhead ; she did well disdain
That her eternal verse employed should be
On a less subject than eternity :
And for a sacred mistress scorned to take
But her, whom God himself scorned not his Spouse to make.
It (in a kind) her miracle did do ;
A fruitful Mother was, and Virgin too.

How well (blest Swan) did fate contrive thy death,
And made thee render up thy tuneful breath
In thy great Mistress' arms—thou, most divine
And richest offering of Loretto's shrine,
Where, like some holy sacrifice, to expire
A fever burns thee, and love lights the fire.

* * *

Thou from low earth in nobler flames didst rise,
And like Elijah, mount alive the skies.
Elisha-like (but with a wish much less,
More fit thy greatness and my littleness)
Lo, here I beg (I, whom thou once didst prove
So humble to esteem, so good to love)
Not that thy spirit might on me doubled be,
I ask but half thy mighty spirit for me.
And when my muse soars with so strong a wing,
'Twill learn of things divine, and first of thee, to sing.

III. SONNET XLVI: FOR HIMSELF.

DANTE: XIII.–XIV. CENTS.

TRANSLATED BY CHARLES LYELL, OF KINNORDY: 1767–1849.

FROM 'THE CANZONIERE OF DANTE ALIGHIERI,' 1835.

PARENT of virtue, Light eternal, thou
Of whom was born the meek benignant Fruit
That suffered on the cross a bitter death,
To save us sinners from the dark abyss:
Thou, Queen of Heaven supreme, and of this world,
Vouchsafe to entreat thy meritorious Son
To lead me to his heavenly kingdom's joys,
Through guidance of his never-failing grace.
Thou know'st my hope was ever placed in thee;
In thee, thou know'st, was still my sole delight;
O Goodness infinite, assist me now:
Help me, for at the bourne I am arrived
Which I must soon inevitably pass;
My Comforter, oh, now desert me not.
For every fault committed here on earth
My soul deplores, and contrite is my heart.

IV. VOTIVE ODE, HUNG UP AT OUR LADY'S SHRINE AT WALSINGHAM, IN 1511.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS: 1467–1536.

TRANSLATED (1874) *FROM THE GREEK BY J. T. WALFORD, S.J.*

FROM WATERTON'S 'PIETAS MARIANA BRITANNICA,' 1879.

HAIL, Jesus' Virgin-Mother ever Blest,
Alone of women Mother eke and Maid,
Others to thee their several offerings make;
This one brings gold, that silver, while a third

Bears to thy shrine his gift of costly gems.
For these, each craves his boon—one strength of limb—
One wealth—one, through his spouse's fruitfulness,
The hope a father's pleasing name to bear—
One Nestor's eld would equal. I, poor bard,
Rich in goodwill, but poor in all beside,
Bring thee my verse—nought have I else to bring—
And beg, in quital of this worthless gift,
That greatest meed—a heart that feareth God,
And free for aye from sin's foul tyranny.
Erasmus his vow.

V. MARY AND JOSEPH IN EGYPT.

ELLEN FITZ-SIMON (NÉE O'CONNELL): 1805–1883.

FROM 'THE ROSARY MAGAZINE,' 1874.

Suggested by a picture of the Egyptian Idols falling down before the Infant Saviour, in the flight into Egypt.

WHILST Joseph leads the patient beast and slow,
That bears the weight of Mary and her Son,
O'er rugged steeps, o'er barren plains they go
Through wildernesses, till the day is done,
Till 'neath the western wave hath set the sun.
Then, rest—till morning her bright face doth show;
Then, on again—their weary race is run.
They pass where stand in pride the Idols: lo,
A crash is heard. In sudden ruin all
Before the Sacred Infant headlong fall.
Dog-faced Anubis, Isis, too, the call,
The silent call obey; that given is now
By the Child-Saviour's mighty presence. How
Doth joy celestial sit on Joseph's brow,
While the meek Mother clasps her precious One.

VI. PADRE PASSAGLIA : 1887.

WILLIAM D. KELLY.

MADONNA, without stain of sin conceived,
Whose pity, like thy boundless love, is great
And swift to succour and compassionate
Those who have sinned, and for their sinning grieved :
Lo, dead lies he, who high renown achieved
When, ere Rome had decreed immaculate
Thy blessèd birth, he toiled to vindicate
The glory which was thine, till all believed ;
And though awhile in devious paths he strayed,
Of the clear vision of his faith bereaved,
Be thou his champion now, benignant Maid.
And let his lapses be for aye reprieved,
Lest haply, Queen, of thee it should be said,
'He trusted in thy love and was deceived.'

VII. A DEAD ASTRONOMER : FATHER STEPHEN J. PERRY, S.J. : 1833–1889.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

STARRY Amorist, starward gone,
Thou art—what thou didst gaze upon :
Passed through thy golden garden's bars,
Thou see'st the Gardener of the stars.
She, about whose moonèd brows
Seven stars make seven glows,
Seven lights for seven woes :
She, like thine own galaxy,
All lustres in one purity.
What saidst thou, Astronomer,
When thou didst discover her ?
When thy hand its tube let fall,
Thou found'st the Fairest Star of all.

Old Catholic Verse

COLLECTED (1846) *BY DOM ALPHONSUS MORRALL, O.S.B.*

FROM A MANUSCRIPT VOLUME, 'A CENTURY OF SONG.'

I. INVOCATION OF MARY.

'And I will tread the virtuous peaceful paths
Of her who trod the subtle Serpent's head,
And wears the silvery crescent on her own.'

O VIRGIN-MOTHER of our gracious Lord,
Thou at whose shrine all kings, all nations bend ;
Mother of Mercies, who thine aid dost lend
To lips who hail thee with the heart's accord ;
Solace of sinners, Load-star ever nigh,
Whose saintly feet the serpent sin have crushed ;
How much I love, when all rude winds are hushed
And silvery moonbeams light the motley sky,
Beneath high heaven's blue vaulted canopy,
In hallowed stillness to invoke thy aid,
And feel my cares released, my sorrows fly ;
For, but to hail thee once, O spotless Maid,
Seems a bright ray of hope in realms on high,
Where pain dissolves in joys that never fade.

II. PRAYER FOR A NOVICE.

'M.C.A.'

SWEET Ladie, she hath given
Herself this day to thee ;
Oh, lead her safe to heaven—
We pray of thee, Marie.

May the roses on her brow
Be far less white to see,
Than the soul she gives thee now—
We pray of thee, Marie.

May the veil she weareth blest
Have less of modestie,
Than the feelings in her breast—
We pray of thee, Marie.

May her garment, coarse and rude,
Show less humilitie,
Than her spirit hath, endued—
We pray of thee, Marie.

May her girdle, which doth tell
Sweet Jesus' charitie,
With his love her bosom swell—
We pray of thee, Marie.

May it make her love to bear,
With him to Calvarie,
The rood of his Passion dear—
We pray of thee, Marie.

For, this is her humble prayer
With thee, most dear Ladie,
In his love and woes to share—
We pray of thee, Marie.

III. HIS QUI LUGENT IN PURGATORIO.

JAMES A. DOMINIC AYLWARD, O.P.: 1813–1872.

To those whose souls do languish
Compassed with flame, but hopeful in their grief,
Who, but for friendly aid, in patient anguish
Must still pine on—in pity bring relief,
Sweet Mary.

For thou art pity's Spring,
Healing and cleansing all who seek thy waters;
Ah, stretch thy hand, the cooling dews to fling
All freshly on thy suffering sons and daughters,
Sweet Mary.

O Mother mild, to thee
The sighing dead appeal for their release;
They long the glories of thy Son to see,
And share with thee in his eternal peace,
Sweet Mary.

O Key of David, made
To open heaven, compassionate their doom—
Prisoned in pain, on beds of sorrow laid—
Unlock the portals of their dungeon-gloom,
Sweet Mary.

Bright Pattern of the just,
Unto all faithful hearts for ever dear,
In thee the weeping dead hold firm their trust;
Oh, urge for them thy strong continual prayer,
Sweet Mary.

Blest over earth and heaven
For thy deserts, pray to thy Royal Son,
That all our trespasses may be forgiven,
And we be ranged around his beaming throne,
Sweet Mary.

IV. MONTH OF MARY.

E. E. M. KENT.

In robes immaculate, the perfumed earth
Now wakes to glory—e'en as woke the sheen
Transcendent, blazing o'er our sinful dearth,
When Mary rose, of Heaven the chosen Queen.

Lady of Angels, Flower of flowers supreme,
From lands ethereal bend those gracious eyes ;
Our altars now with votive offerings teem ;
Behold their bloom ; accept the sacrifice.
From pole to pole, with canticle and choir
Thy children now, sweet Mother, hymn thy praise,
Each virtue thine recount, revere, admire—
Lilies, whose lustre mocks meridian blaze.
O Lady, list—nor scorn, while all rejoice,
The faltering tribute of this meanest voice.

V. AVE, MARIA.

'V.'

THE sun was sinking in the west, 'Ave, Maria,'
Like Angel-spirit to its rest, 'Ave, Maria,'
An ocean flood of golden light
Lay on each hill and woodland height— 'Ave, Maria,'
It seemed a land of fairy sprite, 'Ave, Maria.'

Then each convent bell did ring, 'Ave, Maria,'
Each hill and dale did echoing sing, 'Ave, Maria,'
The gentle peasants did prolong
The sound of that fond thrilling song, 'Ave, Maria,'
Loud chanting, as they moved along, 'Ave, Maria.'

Oh, sweet it is and good to see, 'Ave, Maria,'
The glowing sun sink in the sea, 'Ave, Maria,'
While nature heaves with loving swell
Of choral song and convent bell, 'Ave, Maria,'
All coming that one prayer to tell, 'Ave, Maria.'

Assumpta est Maria, and other Verse

HENRY NUTCOMBE OXENHAM, M.A.: 1829–1888.

I. ASSUMPTA EST MARIA.

FROM 'LYRICS OF LIGHT AND LIFE,' 1874.

THE sun shines bright and glorious, and the hill tops are illumed
With a more than earthly light, the day our Lady was assumed ;
For her, the cloudless blaze of noon on the lonely tarn is glowing,
And the many-sounding torrents chant her praises in their flowing.

For her, the golden valleys thick with corn-fields laugh and sing,
And with innumerous notes of birds the happy woodlands ring ;
The earth is jubilant with song, and a preternatural motion
Stirs the deep music of the waves, in sunless caves of ocean ;

And the sound of many waters, with a voice of solemn mirth,
Like a worship without words, goes up incessant from the earth ;
The 'Magnificat' of mountain-streams, and—sweetest after showers—
A fragrance as of incense wafted from myrtle bowers.

And shall we alone, dear Mother, when all around is gay,
Stand mute amid the minstrel choir that hails thy triumph day?
Nay, by the skylark's matin hymn, flooding the heavens with praise,
Faint echo of their angel-harps who on thy brightness gaze,

We too will raise our anthem, all unaudienced though it be,
Tell thy glories to the snow-clad peaks and far-resounding sea;
In Creation's rolling symphony we will bear our feeble part,
Thou wilt not disdain the homage of a true and loyal heart.

What, if there were who loved to roam these breezy, fern-clad hills,
And to dream away the summer nights beside their trickling rills,
Who thought to seek the beautiful in earth's most beauteous places,
While the mountain-breath was fraught for them with more than earthly graces?

They behold a more than common light on lake and sunny lea;
For Nature, through her sweet constraints, was drawing them to thee;
Oh, lead us home, dear Mother-Maid, who linger on the way,
Lighten the eyes in darkness bound and turn the feet that stray.

Guide thou our steps through troublous paths of anguish
and unrest,
Of subtle questionings, and doubts that may not be
represt,
To the land beyond the eastern hills, lapt in the living ray
Of the Uncreated Vision, where the shadows flee away.

II. PILGRIM BOAT ON THE RHINE.

FROM 'THE SENTENCE OF KAÏRES,' 1854.

MOTHER, our bark floats lightly
Across the glimmering deep;
The silvery moon-beams brightly
On the placid waters sleep:
Still on the mountains hoary
Is fixed our dreaming eye,
Though the sunset's latest glory
Hath faded from on high.

A sound of waters rushing,
Where from many a rocky height
Wild mountain streams are gushing,
Breaks on the stilly night:
No other sound is near us
To mar the deep repose;
Dear Mother, thou wilt hear us,
Thine eyelids never close.

For the earth-wearied spirit,
Methinks, such quiet even
Some music might inherit,
Caught from the harps of heaven.
The moon it glanceth brightly
O'er the untroubled deep;
Thy smile is o'er us nightly
Our dreams from sin to keep.

Star of the Sea, we hail thee,
Bending beneath thy care,
Blest Mother, we assail thee
With the sweet force of prayer :
Thine the deep tender feeling
Which Jesus gave to thee,
The Godhead's Self concealing
In thy meek purity.

Thou art Eden's fairest flower—
For a soul unstained by sin
Was the unearthly dower,
Which thou alone couldst win.
Sweet are the admonitions
Of such a night as this,
For it gives us heavenly visions
Of thine unequalled bliss.

Star-beams, that brightly quiver
In the blue depth above,
Tell how thou art with us ever
In the fulness of thy love.
The gentle moon shall mind us
Of heaven's eternal rest,
Oh, may our last hour find us
With thee among the blest.

Hail, Jesus, Son of Mary,
To the pilgrim's prayer incline,
For the ways of life are weary,
Oh, make us ever thine ;
Thine, in life's early morning ;
Thine, in death's hour of gloom ;
Thine, when the archangel's warning
Shall call our spirits home.

III. THREE PEALS OF THE ANGELUS.

FROM 'THE SENTENCE OF KAÏRES,' 1854.

Toll at the hour of dawn :
When the busy day hath begun ;
That Christians may kneel in life's early morn
To Mary's Incarnate Son ;
For at midnight hour Saint Gabriel spoke,
And Christ was conceived ere morning broke.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace.

Toll at the mid-day hour :
Let the bell toll loud and long ;
For the sun hath risen with a burning power,
And the world and the flesh are waxing strong ;
Through the long hours of the sultry day,
Stay with thy children, Jesus, stay.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace.

Toll at the fall of eve :
When the busy day is done ;
Lest Jesus thy soul in corruption leave,
Call yet again on Mary's Son ;
For at fall of eve, 'mid the gathering gloom,
His body was laid in Saint Joseph's tomb.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace.

Toll for each hour of prayer :
Toll at morning, noon and night ;
Let the loud church-bells, like the angel, declare
The dawn of the World's true Light ;
Till the chimes that inspired our childhood's faith
Are the requiem rung o'er the couch of death.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace.

By Francis T. & W. Gifford Palgrave

FRANCIS T. PALGRAVE, M.A.

FROM 'AMENOPHIS,' 1892.

I. VIRGINI DEIPARÆ.

Mother-Maid all-holy,
Throned upon thy knee,
Evermore the Almighty
Child and Lord we see,
While with awe thou gazest
On the wondrous face—
Blest among all women,
Mary, Full of grace.

Sung by million millions,
Since the distant day
When she walked among us
Her sweet stainless way :
How should we unworthy
To thy praise draw near ;
How, uplift the chorus
Meet for heaven to hear ?

Of that perfect childhood,
Of that youth-time fair,
Scarce a whisper lingers
What thou wast, and where :
Flower amid the flowers
Faith beholds thee go,
Mystic Rose of Sharon,
Lily pure as snow.

O'er the holy bosom
She her faithful hands
Folds, in silence waiting
Highest heaven's commands ;

Till the sun-bright angel
Spoke his awful word,
'Lo, thy will is my will,
Handmaid of the Lord.'

Angels and archangels
Now are round the Maid,
Where the world's Creator
At her knees is laid;
Where she worships o'er him,
God and Man in one,
Son of highest heaven,
Mary's royal Son.

By our great first parent,
Tempted and beguiled,
We were cast from Eden
To the desert wild:
Second Eve and Mother,
By the gift she brought,
God, through Mary's sorrow,
Man's salvation wrought.

On the Babe thou smilest,
He on thee the while:
But his Father's business
Calls him from thy smile:
In the secret archives
It is writ above,
Sevenfold swords shall pierce thee,
Sevenfold wounds of love.

Who should tell, when Mary
Touched the heart of woe?
When she saw death's triumph
Up the dool-way go?

When the whole world's burden
Bent him 'neath the rood?
When it shone, to save us,
With the precious Blood?

By the cross now standing
In that utter woe,
Yet some drops of gladness
In thy sorrows flow;
As the loved disciple
Reverent leads thee home—
Queen in lowly refuge,
Heaven's own ante-room.

Now through rest translated
To the realm assigned,
Crowned with grace we greet thee,
Crown of human-kind:
Yet through all the ages,
Throned upon thy knee,
Mother-Maid, the Almighty
Child and Lord we see.

II. VISIONS OF MARY.

W. GIFFORD PALGRAVE: 1826–1888.

FROM 'A VISION OF LIFE: SEMBLANCE AND REALITY,' 1891.

I. A soul journeying through the world, amongst other visions of man and his works, sees one of pictorial art and her religious achievements. II. The same soul is finally admitted to the vision of the highest heaven.

I. MARY IN CATHOLIC ART.

BOOK I. CHAPTER XXII.

And the dread Mount and Horeb's tempest shrine,
In fire and darkness veiled, were pictured there,

And round the mountain base the warning line.
But these I passed, till shone in sequence fair,
  Crowned with the light nor change, nor time can quell,
Earth's loveliest vision, sole beyond compare,
The Mother-Maid, the Immaculate Miracle,
  In perfect beauty throned ; and next her, One
Whose look was power, whose every word a spell,
A brightness robed in brightness, as the sun
  Clad in a golden cloud ; o'er shame and pain,
Anguish and death, he passed triumphant on.
And they, his legioned followers, the long train
  Of maids and matrons, manhood, age and youth
Came after, of that beauty rapt and fain.

II. MARY IN THE HIGHEST HEAVEN.

BOOK II. CHAPTER XXVII.

And here, the priceless Pearl, the Mother-Maid,
  Lily and Rose of earth, of heaven the Gem,
Goddess and Queen of gods and mortals made.
And these beside, as round the central stem
  Clusters the petalled flower, in scent and hue
Flawless, complete, a self-crowned diadem ;
So those great spirits divine, faithful and true,
  In many fanes enshrined, by many a tongue
Invoked, who to blind men the labyrinth clue
That heavenward leads, 'mid scorn and worst of wrong,
  Have freely placed in hand, together blent,
Here tuned of renovate love the nuptial song.
As in a dream I heard and saw.

The Child's Purchase

COVENTRY PATMORE.

FROM 'THE UNKNOWN EROS,' 1888.

As a young child, whose mother, for a jest,
To his own use a golden coin flings down,
Devises blythe how he may spend it best,
Or on a horse, a bride-cake, or a crown,
Till, wearied with his quest,
Nor liking altogether that, nor this,
He gives it back for nothing but a kiss,
Endowed so I
With golden speech, my choice of toys to buy,
And scanning power and pleasure and renown,
Till each in turn, with looking at, looks vain,
For her mouth's bliss,
To her who gave it give I it again.

Ah, Lady elect,
Whom the time's scorn has saved from its respect,
Would I had art
For uttering this which sings within my heart.
But, lo,
Thee to admire is all the art I know.
My Mother and God's, Fountain of miracle,
Give me thereby some praise of thee to tell
In such a song
As may my guide severe and glad not wrong,
Who never spake till thou'dst on him conferred
The right, convincing word.
Grant me the steady heat
Of thought wise, splendid, sweet,

Urged by the great, rejoicing wind that rings
With draught of unseen wings,
Making each phrase, for love and for delight,
Twinkle like Sirius on a frosty night.
Aid thou thine own dear fame, thou only Fair,
At whose petition meek
The heavens themselves decree that, as it were,
They will be weak.

Thou, Speaker of all wisdom in a Word,
Thy Lord ;
Speaker, who thus couldst well afford
Thence to be silent—ah, what silence that
Which had for prologue thy 'Magnificat.'
Oh, Silence full of wonders,
More than by Moses in the Mount were heard,
More than were uttered by the Seven Thunders ;
Silence that crowns, unnoted, like the voiceless blue,
The loud world's varying view,
And in its holy heart the sense of all things ponders,
That acceptably I may speak of thee,
'Ora pro me.'

Key-note and Stop
Of the thunder-going chorus of sky-powers ;
Essential Drop
Distilled from worlds of sweetest-savoured flowers
To anoint with nuptial praise
The Head which for thy beauty doffed its rays,
And thee, in his exceeding glad descending, meant,
And man's new days
Made of his deed the adorning accident ;
Vast Nothingness of self, fair female Twin
Of fulness, sucking all God's glory in
(Ah, Mistress mine,

To nothing I have added only sin,
And yet, would shine),
'Ora pro me.'

Life's Cradle and death's Tomb,
To lie within whose womb,
There, with divine self-will infatuate,
Love-captive to the thing he did create,
Thy God did not abhor,
No more
Than man, in youth's high spousal-tide,
Abhors at last to touch
The strange lips of his long-procrastinating bride ;
Nay, not the least imagined part as much,
'Ora pro me.'

My Lady, yea, the Lady of my Lord,
Who didst the first descry
The burning secret of virginity,
We know with what reward ;
Prism, whereby
Alone we see
Heaven's light in its triplicity ;
Rainbow complex
In bright distinction of all beams of sex,
Shining for aye
In the simultaneous sky,
To One, thy Husband, Father, Son, and Brother,
Spouse blissful, Daughter, Sister, milk-sweet Mother,
'Ora pro me.'

Mildness, whom God obeys, obeying thyself
Him in thy joyful Saint, nigh lost to sight
In the great gulf
Of his own glory, and thy neighbour light ;
With whom thou wast as else with husband none,

For perfect fruit of inmost amity ;
Who felt for thee
Such rapture of refusal, that no kiss
Ever sealed wedlock so conjoint with bliss ;
And whose good singular eternally
'Tis now, with nameless peace and vehemence
To enjoy thy married smile,
That mystery of innocence,
'Ora pro me.'

Sweet Girlhood without guile,
The extreme of God's creative energy ;
Sunshiny Peak of human personality ;
The world's sad aspirations' one Success ;
Bright Blush, that sav'st our shame from shamelessness ;
Chief Stone of stumbling ; Sign built in the way
To set the foolish everywhere a-bray ;
Hem of God's robe, which all who touch are healed ;
To which the outside many honour yield
With a reward and grace
Unguessed by the unwashed boor that hails him to his face,
Spurning the safe ingratiant courtesy
Of suing him by thee,
'Ora pro me.'

Creature of God, rather the sole than first ;
Knot of the cord
Which binds together all, and all unto their Lord ;
Suppliant Omnipotence ; Best to the worst ;
Our only Saviour from an abstract Christ
And Egypt's brick-kilns, where the lost crowd plods,
Blaspheming its false gods ;
Peace-beaming Star, by which shall come enticed,
Though nought thereof as yet they weet,

Unto thy Babe's small feet,
The mighty, wandering disemparadised,
Like Lucifer, because to thee
They will not bend the knee,
'Ora pro me.'

Desire of him, whom all things else desire ;
Bush aye with him, as he with thee, on fire ;
Neither in his great deed, nor on his throne—
Oh, folly of love, the intense
Last culmination of intelligence—
Him seemed it good that God should be alone :
Basking in unborn laughter of thy lips,
Ere the world was, with absolute delight.
His infinite reposed in thy finite ;
Well-matched : he, universal being's spring,
And thou, in whom are gathered up the ends of everything,
'Ora pro me.'

In season due, on his sweet-fearful bed,
Rocked by an earthquake, curtained with eclipse,
Thou shared'st the rapture of the sharp spear's head
And thy bliss pale
Wrought for our boon, what Eve's did for our bale ;
Thereafter, holding a little thy soft breath,
Thou underwent'st the ceremony of death ;
And now, Queen-Wife,
Sitt'st at the right hand of the Lord of Life
Who, of all bounty, craves for only fee
The glory of hearing it besought with smiles by thee,
'Ora pro me.'

Mother, who lead'st me still by unknown ways,
Giving the gifts I know not how to ask,
Bless thou the work

Which, done, redeems my many wasted days,
Makes white the murk,
And crowns the few which thou wilt not dispraise,
When clear my songs of Lady's graces rang,
And little guessed I, 'twas of thee I sang.

Vainly, till now, my prayers would thee compel
To fire my verse with thy shy fame, too long
Shunning world-blazon of well-pondered song ;
But doubtful smiles, at last, 'mid thy denials lurk ;
From which I spell,
'Humility and greatness grace the task,
Which he who does it deems impossible.'

Petrarch's Twenty-ninth Ode

1304–1374.

C. B. CAYLEY, B.A.: 1823–1883.

FROM 'SONNETS AND STANZAS OF PETRARCH,' 1879.

VIRGIN most Fair, who, clad and crown'd with sun
And stars, didst please the Sun supreme so well
That for his light he made a tent in thee,
Love bids me something of thy praises tell,
But nought, without thy aid, can be begun,
And his, who loved thy body's guest to be.
I cry to one, who answers graciously
Whoe'er in faith implore.
If ever yet the sore
Sufferings of man have touched thy clemency,
Virgin, oh, now to my petition lean ;
Do thou my warfare aid,
Though I be made
Of earth, and thou Heaven's Queen.

Virgin most Wise, and numbered in that band
Of virgins that are blessèd and discreet :
Yea, first thereof, and with the clearest light—
Thou trusty Shield, when death and fortune beat
Poor wretches down, that canst all blows withstand,
Assuring us of triumph, not retreat ;
Relief of troubled hearts from that wild heat
Which here men's follies raise—
O Virgin, let the gaze
Of those fair eyes, which did in sorrow meet
On thy sweet Son's dear limbs each ghastly trace,
Be turned to my distress
Who, succourless,
For succour seek thy face.

Virgin most Pure, in whom no blemish lies,
Daughter and Mother of thy Birth Divine,
Light of this life, of yonder life the Grace,
Thou bright and lofty Window of the skies,
By thee our most High Father's Child and thine
Came down to save the latest of our race ;
And amid every mortal dwelling-place,
Thou, Saintly Maid, alone
Wast chosen, that the moan
Of Eve thou shouldst with jubilee replace.
Oh, make me, for thou canst, his grace beseem,
Thou that beyond all bound
Art blest, and crowned
In yonder court supreme.

Virgin most Holy, Full of grace, that wast
Exalted by thy deep, true humbleness
To heaven, whence thou my orison dost hear ;
Thou broughtest forth the Fount of tenderness

And Sun of justice, who the world, when lost
In errors dense and dark, made bright and clear,
Three names thou linkest, that are sweet and dear—
Mother and Child and Bride.
O Virgin, glorified
Queen of that Lord who to this earthly sphere,
Loosing our bonds, brought liberty with bliss;
True Comforter, impart
Peace to my heart,
By those blest wounds of his.

Virgin, apart from all and singly placed,
Who with thy beauties hast enamoured heaven,
Whom none precedeth, none hath seconded;
Thou that to God hast veritably given,
By holy thoughts and acts devout and chaste,
A temple in thy fruitful maidenhead;
By thee my life to gladness can be led,
If by my prayer, kind Maid,
Sweet Mary, thou be swayed
Where sin abounds, that grace as far may spread.
So, on my spirit's bended knees I pray,
That, tow'rd a better end,
Thou may'st amend
My misdirected way.

Bright Virgin, that for ever dost abide,
Thou Load-star on this ocean tempest-vexed,
Thou trusted Guide of every seaman true—
Look, with how dire a storm I stand perplexed,
Helpless, without one helper at my side,
How close on me the pangs of death pursue.
But thou my soul's Hope art; to thee I sue,

While sinful granting it—
Virgin, do not permit
Thy foe to boast that he can make me rue.
Remember, that God, even for our sin,
To rescue us from doom,
Did flesh assume
Thy virgin shrine within.

Virgin, how many tears have I now spent,
With many a blandishment and many a vow,
All to my hurt and my incumbrance sore.
Since I was born in Arno's vale till now,
By turns to this and that direction bent,
My life has been but trouble evermore.
Of mortal charms, words, graces, what a store
Hath cumbered all my mind.
O Virgin, holy and kind,
Delay not, for my last year I may score.
As swift as arrows fly, my days have flown
In wretchedness and sin ;
And I begin
To wait for death alone.

Virgin, thou know'st who moulders, and my heart
Leaves wretched, which she kept in languishment ;
And where a thousand things were wrong, not one
I knew ; yet had I known them all, the event
Were equal—had she played a different part,
Her fame and my salvation were undone.
O Queen of Heaven, our goddess, if I run
Into no terms forbid—
Thou, from whom nought is hid,
Deep-scanning Virgin, things as yet by none

Performed are nought to thy great potency.
Now therefore, end my woe ;
Reap honour so
Thyself, and save thou me.

Virgin, on whom alone my hopes relie,
Who canst and wilt to my sore trouble give
Thy succours, be thou with me to my end.
Regard not me, but by whose grace I live ;
Let not my merit, but that image high
Which in me dwells, a man so mean, commend.
Thou seest me like a rock, from which descend,
O Virgin, idle streams ;
Some Gorgon, or my dreams,
Have shaped me thus ; but sorrows do thou send
More soft and holy to this breast outworn.
Make my last years devout
And pure throughout,
Though some were madness-born.

Virgin Humane, pride's Foe, if dear thou hold
The common prototype of thee and us,
Have pity upon my humbled heart contrite.
For if I loved, with faith so marvellous,
A piece of earth, a brittle mortal mould,
Thou, noblest thing, may'st more my zeal incite.
If then, from my debased and wretched plight,
Thy hand uplifteth me,
Virgin, I pledge to thee
My chastened pen, my thoughts, my inmost might,
My tongue, my heart, and every tear and sigh ;
Oh, let my changed desire
Thy grace acquire ;
Guide me where true fords lie.

My hour is toward—far it cannot lurk ;
Time runs and flies so well,
O Virgin nonpareil,
While on my heart both death and conscience work.
Commend me to thy Son, for God indeed
And Man indeed is he,
That peacefully
My last breath he may speed.

Poems on Ancient Pictures

English and American

I. TWO ART SONNETS.

FROM 'THE CATHOLIC WORLD,' NEW YORK, 1879.

1. Two Madonnas : Raphael and Murillo.

Is it in grace maternal she excels
Only, or sumptuous womanhood mature,
This Lady of sultana-like coiffure ?
Nay, her dark eyes are thoughts' divinest wells ;
Nay, on her lips the lilies' perfume dwells,
The seal of the angel : doth it not endure
Immortally here, impressed on none less pure
Than, in her arms, the Child-Emmanuel's ?

See, not less tender, less to be adored,
This other Mary : child-eyes wonder-wide
At her Maternity, the mystic Bride,
And Mother, and meek Handmaid of the Lord.

Murillo's Peasant Girl is strangely fair
By that superb Madonna of the Chair.

II. Fra Angelico.

Not for earth's joys, triumphal, hymeneal,
Those harp-strings twang, those golden trumpets blare :
On gilded grounds, in place of the blue air,
In Byzant lines unrounded and unreal,
The simple monk worked out his own ideal—
And were there ever forms more heavenly fair?
Nay, from the life the ineffable angels there
Seem limned and coloured by their servant leal.
What was his charm? Whence the inflowing grace?
The beauty of his holiness. His child-soul dreamed,
When psalm and censer filled the holy place,
Till to take shape the mist the music seemed ;

Till Mary Mother's smile grew out of song,
To symphony of the seraphic throng.

II. 'SANT' IMAGINE': A FRAGMENT ON A PICTURE BY FIORENZO DI LORENZO, IN THE INSTITUTE AT FRANKFORT.

MICHAEL FIELD.

FROM 'SIGHT AND SONG,' 1892.

And wherefore doth Madonna thus look down
So wistful toward the book upon her knees?
Has she no comfort? Is there need
Within the Scriptures she should read
Who to the Living Word her bosom presses?
With bliss of her young Babe so near,
Is it not drear
Darkly from books to understand
What bodes his coming to the land?

Alas, as any other child, he catches at her gown
And with caresses
Breaks on her still 'Magnificat': to ease
And give air to her spirit with her own
Christ she must hold communion in great songs alone.

III. MURILLO'S 'IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.'

DAVID GRAY: 1836–1888.

FROM 'LIFE, POEMS, ETC.,' BUFFALO, NEW YORK, 1888.

WHENCE is the spell—O fair and free from guile,
Thou with the young moon shod—that binds my brain?
Is thine that orb of fable which did wane,
Darkening o'er sad Ortygia's templed isle—
Beautiful Artemis, hid from earth awhile,
And on the pale monk's vigil risen again,
A wonder in the starry sky of Spain?
Comes the myth back, Madonna, in thy smile?
Yea, thou dost teach that the Divine may be
The same, to passing creeds and ages given;
And how the Greek hath dreamed, or Churchman striven,
What reck we, who with eyes tear-blinded see
Thee standing loveliest in the open heaven?
'Ave, Maria,' only heaven and thee.

IV. ON A FLORENTINE PICTURE BY ALBERTINELLI.

JOHN KENYON: 1784–1856.

FROM 'A DAY AT TIVOLI,' 1849.

THIS pictured work, with ancient graces fraught,
Or so they say, Albertinelli wrought.

He who that touching piece achieved, where meet
The sisters twain, in visitation sweet ;
Of which the Tuscan city, 'mid her crowd
Of miracles, e'en yet is justly proud.

Oh, matchless line of years, whose generous strife
Reared the reviving arts to perfect life :
Then, Petrarch's native lay refined on love ;
Then, Angelo the impetuous chisel drove ;
Then, oracles that stirred young Raphael's breast
Spoke forth in colours, clear as words, exprest.

Thou too, the pencil's scarce less gifted seer,
Fair is the dream thy hand interprets here :
How sweet yon Infant Christ's down-beaming smile
On bright Saint John, who lifts his own the while :

That bliss of young maternity how sweet,
Where mildly mingling Saint and Mother meet :
Nay, more than mother's rapture, to behold
Her Saviour-Son, by prophet-bards foretold.

Or if adoring meekness e'er had shrine
In human face, fond Katharine, 'tis in thine :
In that one present joy of all possest,
Heedless of future, and by past unprest.

But hers, who stands anear that elder boy,
Margaret's, I ween, is no untroubled joy ;
In her, methinks, the painter's hand hath sought
Meanings to plant of more than common thought—
A look, as if that calm, yet clouded eye
Had glimpsed the minglings of futurity ;
And 'mid the glories of each final doom,
Foresaw, not less, the sorrows first to come.

V. LINES ON A PICTURE BY LEONARDO DA VINCI, CALLED 'THE VIRGIN OF THE ROCKS.'

CHARLES LAMB: 1775–1834.

While young John runs to greet
The Greater Infant's feet,
The Mother standing by, with trembling passion
Of devout admiration,
Beholds the engaging mystic play and pretty adoration.

* * *

But at her side
An angel doth abide,
With such a perfect joy
As no dim doubts alloy,
An intuition,
A glory, an amenity,
Passing the dark condition
Of blind humanity,
As if he surely knew
All the blest wonders should ensue :
Or he had lately left the upper sphere,
And had read all the sovran schemes and divine riddles there.

VI. ON THE SAME PICTURE.

MARY LAMB: 1764–1847.

Maternal Lady with the virgin grace,
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a Virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy sinless face
Men look upon, they wish to be
Catholic, Madonna fair, to worship thee.

VII. SONNETS FOR PICTURES BY HANS MEMMELING, AT BRUGES.

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI: 1828–1882.

FROM 'ART AND POETRY,' 1850.

I. VIRGIN AND CHILD; IN THE ACADEMY.

MYSTERY: God, Man's Life, born into man
Of Woman. There abideth on her brow
The ended pang of knowledge, the which now
Is calm assured. Since first her task began,
She hath known all. What more of anguish than
Endurance oft hath lived through, the whole space
Through night till night, passed weak upon her face
While, like a heavy flood, the darkness ran?
All hath been told her, touching her dear Son;
And all shall be accomplished. Where he sits
Even now, a Babe, he holds the symbol fruit
Perfect and chosen. Until God permits,
His soul's elect still have the absolute
Harsh nether darkness, and make painful moan.

II. MARRIAGE OF ST. KATHARINE; IN THE HOSPITAL.

MYSTERY: Katharine, the bride of Christ.
She kneels: and on her hand the Holy Child
Setteth the ring. Her life is sad and mild,
Laid in God's knowledge—ever unenticed
From him, and in the end thus fitly priced.
Awe and the music that is near her, wrought
Of angels, hath possessed her eyes in thought:
Her utter joy is hers, and hath sufficed.
There is a pause, while Mary Virgin turns
The leaf and reads. With eyes on the spread book,
That damsel at her knees reads after her.
John whom he loved, and John his harbinger,
Listen and watch. Whereon so e'er thou look,
The light is starred in gems, and the gold burns.

Poetry from 'the Ave Maria,' &c. Notre Dame, Indiana, U.S.A.

1886–1889.

I. OUR LADY'S PURIFICATION.

'*M.A.*'

Oh, purify the first soft ray
That lights the morning sky,
And tints with gold the snowy clouds
That in its pathway lie;
And purify the moonbeam fair
That smiles o'er land and sea:
For though their light is very pure,
'Tis far less pure than she;
Oh, far less pure than she who stood
Before the temple-gate,
Her soul a fount of heavenly light—
Mary Immaculate.

And purify the crystal drops
That gem the violet,
And crown the opening rosebud's brow
With diamond coronet;
The hyacinth amid its leaves,
The blossom on the tree,
Though pure in nature's loveliness,
They are less pure than she—
Less pure than she, that Virgin Blest:
For who can estimate
Her more than angel purity—
Mary Immaculate?

Then purify with all your skill
That delicate snow-flake;
The water-lilies as they float
Upon the silver lake;
The snowy dove with plumes fresh bathed;
The pearls beneath the sea:
For though they all are very pure,
They are less pure than she—
The Virgin-Mother of our God
Without the temple-gate,
Lily of Israel, snow-white Pearl—
Mary Immaculate.

II. THE FIRST ANGELUS BELL.

MARY CATHERINE CROWLEY.

WHAT master wrought the sweet-toned bells
That, soft o'er vales and sylvan dells,
The 'Angelus' first rang?
Gleamed silver pure and virgin gold,
Like souls within the dark clay mould,
Ere rich their spirit voices rolled,
As though an angel sang?

Or voicing the celestial thought,
Pealed forth the chimes, by seraphs fraught
With melody, that thrilled
From star to star, when Gabriel soared,
Before the flame-white Throne adored,
With Mary's answer, and the Lord
The earth with heaven filled?

Or first in Nazareth's holy glade,
When Christ, a Child, there dwelt and prayed,
The flower-bells of spring

Bade he, with fragrant breath of song,
To hail his Mother blessed among
All women, and the wind-swayed throng
The 'Angelus' did ring—

Till music-laden was the air,
Till rose above the valley fair
The chanting echoes: thus
Was nature's sweetest anthem heard,
The listening world with rapture stirred,
As, at the Child-God's potent word,
First rang the 'Angelus'?

III. SEALERS' ROSARY.

RICHARD HOWLEY, D.D.

A goodly fleet
Set in a sea all dazzling white;
Soft azure tints creep forth to meet
The aurora's gold and ruby light
Upon the crystal plain;
While underneath, subdued and sweet,
Sobs the imprisoned main.

The daylight goes;
But fairer night o'er all the zone
From clustered lamps new glory throws;
She sparkles round the ice-king's throne,
And lights his hall;
Like steel, blue-bright, resplendent glows
The iceberg's wall.

'All hands, ahoy,'
Resounds above the gleaming floes;
'To Rosary': the crews deploy
To greet their 'Mary of the Snows,'

Then floats from sail to sail—
'To Rosary': the crews deploy—
Their cry, 'Hail, Mary, hail.'

IV. A PAIR OF DOVES: A RONDEAU.

WILLIAM D. KELLY.

A PAIR of doves, Madonna fair,
And free from even shade of sin,
The temple when you entered in,
You laid before the altar, where
From the high-priest who waited there
The Jewish matrons knelt to win
Their absolution, though akin
To theirs was not the Babe you bear—
A pair of doves.

Your love of poverty's blest share,
O Fair without and Pure within,
Had you not wished thus to declare,
Richer your offering might have been—
A pair of doves.

V. MATER DOLOROSA.

THOMAS J. KERNAN.

THE deep gloom thickens on the altar-hill;
Loud roars the thunder; bursts the mighty rock;
All nature trembles; and the graves unlock
Their hard, unyielding portals; and at will
The dead once more revisit earth. How ill
Does man repay his Saviour's love. The flock
Is scattered, and the hardened rabble mock
The Shepherd—O ye heavens hear—until
The very earth rebukes the ingrates base.

Yet, sinful man, there still is hope for thee
For Mary, ever faithful to the end,
With Magdalen and John, stands in thy place,
And for thee prays beneath the blood-stained tree,
While her pure heart all human sorrows rend.

VI. VIRGIN IMMACULATE.

ANGELIQUE DE LANDE.

Above the moon, her face reflecting heaven;
Beneath her feet, the world and all its strife—
Thus is she pictured, who to man hath given
The Source, the Author, and the Crown of life.

Mary Immaculate, oh, sweetest name,
Second to none but his, thy God, thy Son;
Enkindle in our hearts love's brightest flame,
Virgin of Virgins, O belovèd One.

Thou beauteous Promise of creation's dawn;
Destined Restorer of our fallen state;
Bright Star that ushered in redemption's morn—
Shine on our darkness, O Immaculate.

Purer than crystal streams, or mountain snows,
Whiter than lilies on the lake's blue crest,
Distilling fragrance sweeter than the rose,
Virgin Immaculate, we hail thee blest.

VII. IN MARY'S MONTH.

MARY E. MANNIX.

'Madonna mia,' turn those gentle eyes,
In adoration lifted to the throne,
A moment downward, through the floating skies
To earth, whence truth and holiness seem flown.

Thou wert his Mother, Mary, and thou art;
Yet on the cross he gave us sinners thee,
And bade thee guard within thy stainless heart
Such ingrates vile, such lepers white as we.
O Mother loved—loved spite of darkening sin,
That wraps as with a pall this world of woe—
Open thy tender heart and take us in,
Save from the dangers footsore pilgrims know;
Making to bloom these withered souls of ours,
Madonna, in thine own sweet month of flowers.

VIII. OUR LADY'S FACE.

E. P. RYDER.

THINE is the face that, while the centuries glide
Into the silent chambers of the past,
Remains unchanged, unmoved by time, or tide.
O Queen, upon thy love our hopes are cast:
Sweet semblance of a face I hope to see—
So great the mercy of the God I love—
I seem to see thy lips breathe prayers for me,
Asking that I may share a home above.

And is a heavenly home for such as I?
Lord, grant forgiveness and lift up the load
'Neath which I falter, howsoe'er I try:
And if a space be found in thine abode
Where I may see thy Mother's face and thine,
Heaven shall contain no happier soul than mine.

IX. PORTENTS.

'B. S.'

THE sky is veiled in an inky shroud,
The boom of the surf is fierce and loud—
Ah, woe is me; ah, woe is me.

The storm-king will ride forth to-night,
For the sun went down with lurid light
In the moaning, treacherous sea:
A thunderous calm is in the air,
And the frightened beasts have sought their lair—
Ah, woe is me; ah, woe is me.
How the lambent tongues of lightning glide
Over the muttering, sullen tide,
Like demon-smiles of fiendish glee.
Haste, oh, haste to light the beacon's flame,
And call on our Lady's sacred name—
Ah, woe is me; ah, woe is me.

Ere to-morrow's sun ariseth pale
Many a proud ship will feel the gale;
Many a wreck that sun will see;
Many a corpse upon ocean's breast;
Many a gallant heart at rest—
Ah, woe is me; ah, woe is me.
Many a home will be filled with gloom;
Many a soul have gone to its doom
For an endless eternity.
Oh, light blest tapers on Mary's shrine,
And call on her and her Son Divine—
Ah, woe is me; ah, woe is me.
Though the waves be raging for their prey,
Both wind and waves must the will obey
Of the Virgin-Star of the Sea.

X. AVE-MARIA BELLS.

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD.

At dawn, the joyful choir of bells,
In consecrated citadels,
Flings on the sweet and drowsy air
A brief, melodious call to prayer;

For Mary, Virgin meek and lowly,
Conceivèd of the Spirit Holy,
As the Lord's angel did declare.

At noon, above the fretful street,
Our souls are lifted to repeat
The prayer, with low and wistful voice:
'According to thy word and choice,
Though sorrowful and heavy laden,
So be it done to thy Handmaiden':
Then all the sacred bells rejoice.

At eve with roses in the west,
The daylight's withering bequest,
Ring, prayerful bells, while blossom bright
The stars, the lilies of the night:
Of all the songs the years have sung us,
'The Word made Flesh has dwelt among us,'
Is still our ever-new delight.

XI. MATER INVIOLATA.

WILLIAM P. TREACY.

I STOOD in thought beside a circling sea,
Whose waters were more clear than morning light;
More calm than those that first met Adam's sight;
More beautiful than those of earth can be;
No slimy weed, nor jagged stone, nor tree,
Was ever mirrored in those waters bright;
But there I saw deep golden rays that might
Shine in the court of the Divinity.

'Twas thy pure soul, O Mary, kind and sweet,
That came to cheer my heart and glad mine eyes;
For in thy soul so calm, so pure, so mild,
The piercing gaze of God could never meet—
As there, alone, the Sun of Justice lies—
A thing of earth, or aught by earth defiled.

Hymn in Praise of the Virgin Mary

SAINT CUCHUMNEUS: VII.–VIII. CENTS.

TRANSLATED BY T. J. POTTER: 1827–1873,
AND CONTRIBUTED BY J. O'LAVERTY, P.P., M.R.I.A.

The original may be found in the 'Liber Hymnorum,' in the Franciscan Convent, Dublin, a MS. of the Eighth Century. The translation, taken from Cardinal Moran's 'Essays on the Early Irish Church,' 1864.

In alternate measure chanting, daily sing we Mary's praise;
And in strains of glad rejoicing, to the Lord our voices raise.
With a two-fold choir repeating Mary's never-dying fame,
Let each ear the praises gather, which our grateful tongues proclaim.
Judah's ever-glorious Daughter—chosen Mother of the Lord—
Who, to weak and fallen manhood, all its ancient worth restored.
From the Everlasting Father, Gabriel brought the glad decree,
That, the Word Divine conceiving, she should set poor sinners free.
Of all virgins pure, the purest—ever stainless, ever bright—
Still from grace to grace advancing, fairest Daughter of the Light.
Wondrous title—who shall tell it?—whilst the Word Divine she bore,
Though in Mother's name rejoicing, Virgin purer than before.

By a woman's disobedience, eating the forbidden tree,
Was the world betrayed and ruined—was by Woman's aid set free.

In mysterious mode a Mother, Mary did her God conceive,
By whose grace, through saving waters, man did heavenly truth receive.

By no empty dreams deluded, for the Pearl which Mary bore,
Men, all earthly wealth resigning, still are rich for evermore.

For her Son a seamless tunic Mary's careful hand did weave ;
O'er that tunic fiercely gambling, sinners Mary's heart did grieve.

Clad in helmet of salvation, clad in breastplate shining bright,
May the hand of Mary guide us to the realms of endless light.

'Amen ; Amen' ; loudly cry we—may she, when the fight is won,
O'er avenging fires triumphing, lead us safely to her Son.

Holy angels gathering round us, lo, his saving name we greet ;
Writ in books of life eternal, may we still that name repeat.

NOTE.

Line 19 : For her Son a seamless tunic Mary's careful hand did weave ; This statement carries backward the tradition, that our Lady wove our Blessed Lord's seamless garment, to the beginning of the Eighth Century.

Chaplet of Memories

ADELAIDE A. PROCTER: 1835–1864.

THE SHRINES OF MARY.

FROM 'A CHAPLET OF VERSES,' 1862.

PRELUDE.

THERE are many Shrines of our Lady,
In different lands and climes,
Where I can remember kneeling
In old and belovèd times.
They arise now like stars before me
Through the long, long night of years;
Some are bright with a heavenly radiance,
And others shine out through tears.
They arise, too, like mystical flowers,
All different, and all the same—
As they lie in my heart like a garland
That is wreathed round Mary's name.
Thus each shrine has two consecrations—
One all the faithful can trace,
But one is for me and me only,
Holding my soul with its grace.

I

A SHRINE in a quaint old chapel
Defaced and broken with years,
Where the pavement is worn with kneeling,
And the step with kisses and tears.

She is there in the dawn of morning,
When the day is blue and bright,
In the shadowy evening twilight,
And the silent, starry night.
Through the dim old painted window
The hours look down and shed
A different glory upon her,
Violet, purple and red
And there—in that quaint old chapel
As I stood one day alone—
Came a royal message from Mary,
That claimed my life as her own.

II

I REMEMBER a vast cathedral
Which holds the struggle and strife
Of a grand and powerful city,
As the heart holds the throb of a life ;
Where the ebb and the flow of passion,
And sin in its rushing tide
Have dashed on that worn stone chapel,
Dashed and broken and died.
And above the voices of sorrow
And the tempter's clamorous din,
The voice of Mary has spoken
And conquered the pain and the sin :
For long ages and generations
Have come there to strive and to pray ;
She watched and guided them living,
And does not forget them to-day.
And once, in that strange, vast city
I stood in its great stone square,
Alone in the crowd and the turmoil
Of the pitiless southern glare ;

And a grief was upon my spirit,
Which I could not cast away,
It weighed on my heart all the night-time,
And it fretted my life all day.
So then to that calm cool refuge
I turned from the noisy street,
And I carried my burden of sorrow—
And left it at Mary's feet.

III

I REMEMBER a lonely chapel
With a tender claim upon me,
It was built for the sailors only,
And they call it the 'Star of the Sea':
And the murmuring chant of the vespers
Seems caught up by the wailing breeze,
And the throb of the organ is echoed
By the rush of the silver seas:
And the votive hearts and the anchors
Tell of danger and peril past;
Of the hope deferred and the waiting
And the comfort that came at last.
I too had a perilous venture,
On a stormy and treacherous main,
And I too was pleading to Mary
From the depths of a heart in pain.
It was not a life in peril—
O God, it was far, far more;
And the whirlpool of hell's temptations
Lay between the wreck and the shore.
Thick mists hid the light of the beacon,
And the voices of warning were dumb—
So I knelt by the altar of Mary,
And told her her hour was come:

For she waits till earth's aid forsakes us,
Till we know our own efforts are vain ;
And we wait, in our faithless blindness,
Till no chance but her prayers remain.
And now in that sea-side chapel,
By that humble village shrine,
Hangs a heart of silver that tells her
Of the love and the gladness of mine.

IV

THERE is one far shrine I remember
In the years that are fled away,
Where the grand old mountains are guarding
The glories of night and day :
Where the earth in her rich, glad beauty
Seems made for our Lady's throne,
And the stars in their radiant clusters
Seem fit for her crown alone :
Where the balmy breezes of summer
On their odorous pinions bear
The fragrance of orange blossoms,
And the chimes of the convent prayer.
There, I used to ask for her blessing
As each summer twilight was grey ;
There, I used to kneel at her altar
At each blue, calm dawn of day.
There, in silence was victory granted,
And the terrible strife begun,
That only with her protection,
Could be dared, or suffered, or won.
If I love the name of that altar,
And the thought of those days gone by,
It is only the heart of Mary
And my own that remember why.

V

WHERE long ages of toil and of sorrow,
And poverty's weary doom,
Have clustered together so closely
That life seems shadowed with gloom ;
Where crime that lurks in the darkness
And vice that glares at the day,
Make the spirit of hope grow weary
And the spirit of love decay ;
Where the feet of the wretched and sinful
Have closest and oftenest trod,
Is a house, as humble as any,
Yet we call it the House of God.
It is one of our Lady's chapels ;
And though poorer than all the rest,
Just because of the sin and the sorrow
I think she loves it the best.
There are no rich gifts on the altar ;
The shrine is humble and bare ;
Yet the poor and the sick and the tempted
Think their home and their heaven is there :
And before that humble altar
Where our Lady of Sorrow stands,
I knelt with a weary longing
And I laid a vow in her hands ;
And I know when I enter softly
And pause at that shrine to pray,
That the fret and the strife and the burden
Will be softened and laid away.
And the prayer and the vow that sealed it
Have bound my soul to that shrine ;
For the Mother of Sorrows remembers
Her promise, and waits for mine.

ENVOY.

IT is one long chaplet of memories,
Tender and true and sweet,
That gleam in the past and the distance
Like lamps that burn at her feet ;
Like stars that will shine for ever,
For time cannot touch, or stir
The graces that Mary has given,
Or the trust that we give to her.
Past griefs are perished and over ;
Past joys have vanished and died ;
Past loves are fled and forgotten ;
Past hopes have been laid aside ;
Past fears have faded in daylight ;
Past sins have melted in tears—
One love and remembrance only
Seems alive in those dead old years.
So wherever I look in the distance,
And whenever I turn to the past,
There is always a Shrine of Mary
Each brighter still than the last.
I will ask for one grace, O Mother,
And will leave the rest to thy will ;
From one shrine of thine to another,
Let my life be a pilgrimage still :
At each one, O Mother of Mercy,
Let still more of thy love be given,
Till I kneel at the last and brightest—
The throne of the Queen of Heaven.

Prologues

I. BEGINNING OF A BALLAD IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

ALEXANDER BARCLAY: XV.–XVI. CENTS.

FROM THE TRANSLATION OF SEBASTIAN BRANDT'S 'SHIP OF FOOLS.'

O Mother-Mary, Flower of woman-kind,
In beauty passing each earthly creature,
In whom the fiend no thought of sin could find;
O blessed Mother, remaining Maiden pure,
O shining Lamp, in light passing nature,
Most clear Crystal, by clean virginity,
O holy Mother, and Virgin most demure—
Direct our life in this tempestuous sea.

II. INVOCATIO AD MARIAM.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER: 1340–1400.

MODERNISED (1892) *BY WILLIAM J. BLEW, M.A.*

FROM THE OPENING OF 'THE SECOND NUN'S TALE.'

And thou that art the Flower of Virgins all,
Of whom that Bernard list so well to write,
To thee at my beginning first I call,
Solace of sinners, help me to endite
The maiden's death that, through her merite's might,
Won life eternal and the foul fiend smote—
As men may after in her story note.

Thou, Maid and Mother, Daughter of thy Son,
Thou, Well of Mercy, sick souls' Remedy,
In whom that God of Bounty chose to won,

Thou, humble, yet o'er every creature high,
Our nature thou so far didst glorify
That nought disdained the Maker of mankind
His Son in flesh and blood to clothe and wind.

Within the blissful cloister of thy side
Took shape of man the Eternal Love and Peace,
That of the realm threefold is Lord and Guide,
Whom earth and sea and heaven do never cease
To laud and praise ; and thou all passionless
Bare of thy body a pure Maiden's Son,
Creator of the all-wide creatïon.

Assembled is in thee magnificence
With mercy, goodness and so great pitie
That thou, that art the Sun of Excellence,
Not only helpest them that pray to thee,
But often time, of thy benignity
Full freely, ere that men thine help beseech,
Dost go before and art their lives' true Leech.

Now help, thou meek and blissfulest fair Maid,
Me wretched outcast upon this waste of gall,
Think on the Canaan-woman how she said
'Yet, Lord, the dogs eat of the crumbs in hall
That underneath their master's table fall' ;
And though that I, unworthy son of Eve,
Be sinful, yet accept of my believe.

And for that faith without good works is dead,
So for my working gïve me wit and space,
That I be quit of endings dark and dread ;
O thou that art so fair and full of grace,
Be thou mine Advocate in that high place
Where without end is sung the glad Osanne,
Mother of Christ, thou Daughter dear of Anne.

And of thy light, light up my soul belate,
That, by contagion of my flesh fordone,
Much troubled is; and also by the weight
Of earthly lust and false affection;
Haven of refuge, O sweet saving One
Of souls in sorrow and distress—now bless me,
And help the work whereto I thus address me.

III. INVOCATION TO MARY.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER: 1340–1400.
MODERNISED (1801) *BY W. WORDSWORTH.*

FROM THE OPENING OF 'THE PRIORESS' TALE.'

O LORD, our Lord, how wondrously (quoth she)
Thy name in this large world is spread abroad;
For not alone by men of dignity
Thy worship is performed and precious laud;
But by the mouths of children, gracious God,
Thy goodness is set forth; they, when they lie
Upon the breast, thy name do glorify.

Wherefore in praise, the worthiest that I may,
Jesu, of thee and the white Lily-flower
Which did thee bear, and is a Maid for aye,
To tell a story I will use my power;
Not that I may increase her honour's dower,
For she herself is Honour, and the Root
Of goodness, next her Son, our soul's best boot.

O Mother-Maid, O Maid and Mother free,
O Bush unburnt, burning in Moses' sight,
That down didst ravish from the Deity,
Through humbleness, the Spirit that did alight
Upon thy heart, whence through that glory's might

Conceivèd was the Father's Sapience—
Help me to tell it in thy reverence.

Lady, thy goodness, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue and thy great humility,
Surpass all science and all utterance;
For sometimes, Lady, ere men pray to thee,
Thou goest before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

My knowledge is so weak, O blissful Queen,
To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness,
That I the weight of it may not sustain;
But as a child of twelve months old, or less,
That laboureth his language to express,
Even so fare I; and therefore I thee pray,
Guide thou my song which I of thee shall say.

IV. DEDICATION OF HIS 'CHRONICLES OF ENGLAND AND FRANCE.'

ROBERT FABYAN: XV.-XVI. CENTS.

Most Blessed Lady, Comfort to such as call
To thee for help in each necessity,
And what thou aidest may in no wise appal,
But to the best is formed in ylke degree,
Wherefore, good Lady, I pray it may please thee,
At my beginning my pen so to lead
That by thine aid this work may have good speed.

NOTE.

No. III. Line 14: Our soul's best boot; From the Anglo-Saxon 'bot'– a word which may be understood from the line 'God send every man boot for his bale,' i.e. alleviation for his trouble.

Raphael's Madonna di San Sisto

English and American Estimates

I.

ALFRED GURNEY, M.A.

FROM 'A CHRISTMAS FAGGOT,' 1884.

Behold, by Raphael shown, Love's sacrament :
Earth's curtains part ; God's veil is lifted up ;
There comes a Child, forth from his bosom sent
To rule the feast of life, his bread and cup,
His purpose making plain with man to sup.
Out-streams the light, accomplished is the sign—
A Virgin-Mother clasps a Babe Divine.

Her lovely feet descend the cloudy stair,
Great succour bringing to a world forlorn ;
On either side a man and woman share
A common rapture, welcoming the dawn
Of God's new day, the everlasting morn—
Of such a day as shall, from east to west,
Dispel the darkness, doing Love's behest.

He turns a face all radiant to the sun,
Enamoured of the sight he looks upon ;
She to the end of what is now begun
Down-gazes, stooping, shadowed by the throne
Made by a Maiden's arms, Maternal grown ;
Than ivory most fair, than purest gold,
More pure, more fair and stronger to uphold.

On cherubs twain, whom watching has made wise,
A spell has fallen—a prophetic dream ;
Their upward-gazing and far-seeing eyes,
Like stars reflected in a tranquil stream,
To look beyond the Child and Mother seem ;

A twisted thorn-branch and a cross to them
Are manifest—his throne and diadem.

High heaven open stands, and there a crowd
Of worshippers with love-lit eyes appear,
Like stars down-gazing through a fleecy cloud,
Dimly discerned as morning draweth near,
Spreading a radiant pall upon night's bier.
The blessed thing the sign doth signify
They partly know, and are made glad thereby.

But more the Mother knows, and more she sees
Than soaring angel, or than climbing saint;
Her heart familiar grown with mysteries
Of God's own working under love's constraint—
The remedy she knows for man's complaint.
The clouds are all beneath her, and above
The light of life, the radiancy of love.

And he, whom Lord of Love and Life we hail,
Is on her bosom borne, a Blossom fair;
The pentecostal breath that lifts her veil
Has fanned his royal brow, and stirred his hair,
And kissed his lips just parted for a prayer.
That Spirit-wind shall blow, that Face shall shine,
Till all his brothers know their Father's Sign.

II.

CHARLES KENT.

FROM 'THE MONTH,' 1874.

This is the vision that I see arise
Like heaven unveiled to my adoring eyes—
The spotless Virgin poised in air serene,
With rapturous gaze and beatific mien;

The Infant-God, with his sublimest charms,
Throned in the clasp of her maternal arms ;
Uplift my ravished senses to the skies,
And bear me to the gates of Paradise.

And as when erst on Thabor's holy sward,
To right, to left of earth's transfigured Lord,
Wrapt in the effulgence of that Form revered,
There Moses, there Elias re-appeared.
So here, in ether, 'mid the clouds are seen,
The glowing heaven's disparted veil between,
In hoary age and blooming youth displayed,
The reverent Pontiff and revering maid ;
Sixtus discrowned, as though his hand had strown
Three crowns at once before the Great White Throne ;
And Barbara, bending as the virgin-bride
Who waits the Bridegroom, with her lamp supplied.

Beneath, as though some casement in the sky
Were opened once for mortals ere they die,
Angelic types of those who do his will,
Lean forth entranced on the celestial sill.

Lost in the blaze that makes their splendours dim
Are cherub hosts and burning seraphim,
In myriad myriads dwindling from the sight,
Drowned in the depths of the Primeval Light.

The matchless whole a revelation seems
Of art's divinest and serenest dreams :
The God-like calm of that supernal brow
The Babe's rayed curls the Incarnate Word avow,
Gleams of the glory that the heavens declare
Stir in the radiant nimbus of his hair.
And she, the Maiden-Mother, whose sweet face
Shines with the effluence of the Godhead's grace—

Who shall define the infinite beauty shown
In every line that marks her for his own?
Who shall describe the exquisite surprise,
Love, peace and joy of her seraphic eyes?
The wondrous worlds of grief and rapture blent,
Consoled, assured in every lineament?

There in the symbolled Eden of that glance,
In the rapt bliss of that one countenance,
The eye discerns, the elated heart can find
The lowliest, heavenliest attributes combined.
No term of praise adorns the 'Song of Songs'
But to that rare angelic look belongs.
What phrase is in Loretto's Litany?
Look in that face—it claims the apostrophe.

III.

GEORGE H. MILES.

FROM 'CHRISTINE,' NEW YORK, 1866.

THREE-HUNDRED years the world has looked at it
Unwearied—it, at heaven: and here it hangs
In Dresden, making it a Holy City.
It is an old acquaintance: you have met
Copies by thousands—Morghens here and there—
But all the sunlight withered. Prints, at best,
Are but the master's shadow—as you see.
I call that face the holiest revelation
God ever made to genius. How, or why,
When, or for whom 'twas painted, wherefore ask?
Enough to know 'tis Raphael, and to feel
His Fornarina was not with him, when
Spurning the slow cartoon he flashed that face,
That Virgin-Mother's half-transfigured face,

On canvas. Yes : they say, 'twas meant to head
Some virginal procession : to that banner
Heaven's inmost gates might open, one would think.
But let the picture tell its story. Take
Your stand in this far corner. Falls the light
As you would have it ? That, Saint Barbara ;
Observe her inclination, and the finger
Of Sixtus : both are pointing—where? Now, look
Below—those grand boy-angels : watch their eyes
Fastened —on whom ? What : not yet catch my meaning ?
Step closer—half a step—no nearer. Mark
The Babe's fixed glance of calm equality.
Observe that wondering, rapt, dilated gaze,
The Mother's superhuman joy and fear,
That hushed, that startled adoration. Watch
Those circled cherubs swarming into light,
Wreathing their splendid arch, their golden ring,
Around the unveiled vision. Look above
At the drawn curtain. Ah ; we do not see
God's self ; but they do. They are face to face
With the Eternal Father.

Sir, 'tis strange :
That wondrous Virgin-face, which Raphael plucked
From his vast soul four centuries ago,
Is breathing now—not in his Italy—
But on the shores where then first flashed the sail
Of Genoa's ocean Pilot.

Years ago
We met mid-heaven, like drops of summer rain ;
Then, falling, parted.

But observe the picture :
Am I not right ? Just, just before them burns,
Viewless to us, the Unveiled Omnipotent.
Yet somehow, critics fail to see, or say this.

The Mother of Jesus

HENRY A. RAWES, O.S.C., D.D.: 1826–1885.

FROM 'FOREGLEAMS OF THE DESIRED,' 1881.

I. OUR LADY'S BIRTH.

When September's sun was shining
On the corn-clad mountain-side;
When Engaddi's lonely vineyards
Shone in green and purple pride:
When the broadening moon in autumn
Saw the harvest gathered in;
Then there came the Prince's Daughter,
Mary, without stain of sin.

From the crest of sun-lit mountains
Standing in a desert wild,
Came our Lord's predestined Mother,
Came the sin-destroying Child:
Light unearthly burns around her,
Sign of more than man can see;
Joachim and Anna wonder
What this mystery can be.

For the world such welcome glory,
Till that hour was never seen;
When the heaven-sent angels watching,
Knelt around their infant Queen:
Legions of victorious angels
Guard her with their wings outspread;
Purer light than theirs is streaming
From her little star-crowned head.

Gabriel there beside her kneeleth,
Sent as herald of the Dove ;
There the mighty heart of Michael
Throbbeth with its new-found love :
Seeing God, they give their worship
To the Babe o'er whom they bend ;
While with them in songs of morning
Earth and heaven their praises blend.

Not as Jesus came, came Mary,
In the wintry days of snow ;
But amid the yellow harvest,
In the autumn's golden glow :
Thus September heavy-fruited,
Clad in russet brown and green,
Gave the world its sinless Daughter,
Gave the Church her sun-clothed Queen.

II. GRACES OF MARY.

No grace so full as hers,
Incarnate Wisdom's shrine,
His Temple paved with gold,
Where glories mingled shine—
For there our human life
Was linked with Life Divine.

No name so dear as hers,
The sinless Mother-Maid,
Within whose virgin arms
The Son of God was laid—
The new-born Son of Man,
Who sea and stars had made.

No joy so pure as hers,
The Virgins' chosen Queen,
Upon whose faultless soul
No stain of sin has been—
The purest joy by far
That highest heaven has seen.

No love so strong as hers,
The Eternal Spirit's Bride,
Which seraphim know not
In flowing of its tide—
Where by the King she reigns,
For ever at his side.

No thoughts so wise as hers,
Far-reaching, never dim,
The Mother of Fair Love
Drawn ever close to him—
Far wiser in God's eyes
Than thoughts of cherubim.

No strength so great as hers,
Who weakness never knew ;
Who kept for her Beloved
All fruits, both old and new—
Stronger than mighty thrones,
Yet stronger ever grew.

No peace so deep as hers,
Who reigns among the blest ;
Where sorrow comes no more,
Where weary souls find rest—
Queen of the peaceful world,
On Sion's highest crest.

No throne so high as hers,
Beyond a seraph's flight ;
Where gold, like crystal clear
Is brightest to the sight ;
Where thrones most loved of God
Are bathed in whitest light.

No light so sweet as hers,
The crown of pure desires ;
Where glory dazzles not,
Where sweetness never tires ;
Far above saints redeemed,
Far above angel-choirs.

III. CANTICLE.

Blest Mother of my Lord, I fly to thee,
Who ever hast a mother's love for me,
Who prayest ceaselessly to God for me.

Thou Queen, who givest gifts of light to me,
In joy and weariness I turn to thee,
Lifting my hands and all my heart to thee.

No love of Jesus is flame-winged like thine,
For all his overflowing Heart is thine ;
My Mother Mary, make thy Jesus mine.

No heart is steeped in love of God like thine ;
No spirit lightens in his eyes like thine ;
Thou loving Mother, make thy Jesus mine.

I seek, and cannot find him without thee ;
Or worship him, or love him without thee ;
For he is thine, and evermore with thee.

But always do I find my Love with thee ;
For thou didst bring my dearest Love to me ;
Oh, bring him now ; oh, bring thy Son to me.

Thou chosen Daughter of the Living One ;
Thou sun-clothed Mother of the Living One ;
Thou Bride, star-crownèd, of the Living One ,

The souls in Purgatory turn to thee ;
Their cry of pain uprises unto thee—
A voiceless cry by day and night to thee.

Thou helpest souls on earth who know not thee,
The souls who trust with childlike love to thee,
The souls who look in pain and grief to thee.

Help thou all suffering souls, most loving One ;
Much solace give to them, most loving One ;
Remembering thine own pain, most loving One.

A flower-like splendour in the love of God,
Thy soul most filled with sweetest bliss of God,
Thou liest crowned upon the Heart of God.

My Mother, thou art dearest to the King,
Touching the golden sceptre of the King,
Thy sinless hands uplifting to the King.

My Mother, evermore the Queen of Heaven,
The risen stars are round thy throne in heaven ;
Thy Son, the Saint's Desire, is King of Heaven.

Bring me in safety where I wish to be,
To light of promise where I pray to be,
The heaven of Jesus where I long to be.

Bring me to him who sought on earth for me,
Who lived, divinely sorrowful, for me—
Thy Jesus, Son of God, who died for me.

Rossetti's Ode: 'Ave'

DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI: 1828–1882.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1870; REVISED 1881.

MOTHER of the Fair Delight,
Thou Handmaid perfect in God's sight,
Now sitting fourth beside the Three,
Thyself a Woman-trinity—
Being a Daughter born to God,
Mother of Christ from stall to rood,
And Wife unto the Holy Ghost—
Oh, when our need is uttermost,
Think that to such as death may strike
Thou once wert Sister sister-like:
Thou Headstone of humanity,
Groundstone of the great mystery,
Fashioned like us, yet more than we.

Mind'st thou not (when June's heavy breath
Warmed the long days in Nazareth),
That eve thou didst go forth to give
Thy flowers some drink, that they might live
One faint night more amid the sands?
Far off the trees were as pale wands
Against the fervid sky: the sea
Sighed further off eternally,
As human sorrow sighs in sleep.
Then suddenly, the awe grew deep,
As of a day to which all days
Were footsteps in God's secret ways:
Until a folding sense, like prayer,
Which is as God is, everywhere,

Gathered about thee ; and a voice
Spake to thee without any noise,
Being of the silence : 'Hail,' it said,
'Thou that art highly favourèd ;
The Lord is with thee here and now ;
Blessed among all women thou.'

Ah, knew'st thou of the end, when first
That Babe was on thy bosom nursed ?
Or when he tottered round thy knee,
Did thy great sorrow dawn on thee ?
And through his boyhood, year by year
Eating with him the Passover,
Didst thou discern confusedly
That holier Sacrament, when he,
The bitter cup about to quaff,
Should break the Bread and eat thereof ?
Or came not yet the knowledge, even
Till on some day forecast in heaven
His feet passed through thy door to press
Upon his Father's business ?
Or still was God's high secret kept ?

Nay, but I think the whisper crept
Like growth through childhood. Work and play,
Things common to the course of day,
Awed thee with meanings unfulfilled ;
And all through girlhood, something stilled
Thy senses like the birth of light,
When thou hast trimmed thy lamp at night,
Or washed thy garments in the stream ;
To whose white bed had come the dream,
That he was thine and thou wast his
Who feeds among the field-lilies.
Oh, solemn shadow of the end
In that wise spirit long contained.

Oh, awful end ; and those unsaid
Long years, when 'It was finishèd.'

Mind'st thou not (when the twilight gone
Left darkness in the house of John),
Between the naked window-bars
That spacious vigil of the stars?
For thou, a watcher even as they,
Wouldst rise from where, throughout the day,
Thou wroughtest raiment for his poor ;
And finding the fixed terms endure
Of day and night, which never brought
Sounds of his coming chariot,
Wouldst lift, through cloud-waste unexplored,
Those eyes which said, 'How long, O Lord?'
Then that disciple whom he loved,
Well heeding, haply would be moved
To ask thy blessing in his name ;

And that one thought in both, the same
Though silent, then would clasp ye round
To weep together—tears long bound,
Sick tears of patience, dumb and slow.
Yet, 'Surely I come quickly' ; so
He said, from life and death gone home.
'Amen : even so, Lord Jesus, come.'

But oh, what human tongue can speak
That day, when Michael came to break
From the tired spirit, like a veil,
Its covenant with Gabriel
Endured at length unto the end?
What human thought can apprehend
That mystery of Motherhood,
When thy Beloved at length renewed
The sweet communion severèd—

His left hand underneath thine head,
And his right hand embracing thee?
Lo, he was thine; and this is he.

Soul, is it faith, or love, or hope,
That lets me see her standing up
Where the light of the Throne is bright?
Unto the left, unto the right,
The cherubim, succinct, conjoint,
Float inward to a golden point,
And from between the seraphim
The glory issues for a hymn.
O Mary Mother, be not loth
To listen—thou whom the stars clothe,
Who seëst and mayst not be seen.
Hear us, at last, O Mary Queen;
Into our shadow bend thy face,
Bowing thee from the secret place,
O Mary Virgin, Full of grace.

Contributions to 'the Irish Monthly'

MATTHEW RUSSELL, S.J.

FROM 'EMMANUEL,' 1878; AND 'MADONNA,' 1880.

I. TO THE QUEEN OF MAY: A SONG.

O Mary, dearest Mother,
Thy month is come again,
Of all the months most welcome
To angels and to men—
The month of birds and blossoms,
The flowery, sunny May,
When earth and sky, dear Mother,
To thee fond tribute pay.

And so, O dearest Mother,
Before the simple shrine
Which we have decked with flowers
Because we call it thine,
We kneel to scatter incense
And prayer and song for thee :
Look down, O dearest Mother,
Look down, to hear and see.

Look down on us thy children,
O Mother dear, look down ;
The mother's face beams kindly
When other faces frown :
Though thou art Queen of Heaven,
And reign'st in joy above,
Yet still, O dearest Mother,
Look down on us with love.

Ah, we have forced thee often,
All loving as thou art,
To turn in sadness from us,
Thine eyes—but not thy heart :
In grief, but not in anger,
Though we have tried thee sore :
Yet smile again, dear Mother,
We'll vex thy heart no more.

By him who calls thee Mother,
And bids us do the same—
By him, thy Son, who gives us
A brother's tender name—
By all the love that yearneth
Within thine own pure heart,
O Mother, be a mother,
And act a mother's part.

In heaven's eternal May-time
Whose sunlight is the Lamb,
In the gladness and the glory,
The rapture and the calm—
We'll praise thee and we'll bless thee,
With happy saints above,
If now, O mighty Mother,
Thou look on us with love.

II. ST. BERNARD'S PRAYER TO OUR LADY

DANTE'S PARADISO: CANTO XXXIII.

O VIRGIN-MOTHER, Daughter of thy Son,
Of creatures all the lowliest, loftiest One,
Term of God's counsel, fixed ere time begun.
Our human race thou hast to such degree
Ennobled in thy Maker's eye, that he
His Creature's Child hath not disdained to be.
Kindled anew within thy womb's pure shrine,
Did burn the love beneath whose glow benign
Bloomed in eternal peace this Flower divine.
Here, unto us, thou art the noonday Light
Of Charity—below, in earth's dark night,
Thou art of Hope the living Fountain bright.
Lady, so great thou art, thy power so high,
Who longs for grace, nor breathes to thee his sigh,
Would have his wishes without wings to fly.
Thy bounty succoureth not him alone
Who asks for it; but, oftentimes is known
Freely to come ere the demand hath flown.
In thee all mercy, clemency we find;
In thee all splendour—all in thee combined,
Whatever is of good in human kind.
O Queen, who canst whate'er thou wilt, I pray
That he who hath such wonders seen to-day,
'Neath thy protection ever safe may stay.

III. MEMORARE: A PRAYER.

Remember, holy Mary,
'Twas never heard, nor known,
That anyone who sought thee
And made to thee his moan—
That anyone who hastened
For shelter to thy care,
Was ever yet abandoned
And left to his despair:
No, never, Blessed Virgin,
Most merciful, most kind,
No sinner cries for pity
Who does not pity find.

And so to thee, my Mother,
With filial faith I call;
For Jesus dying gave thee
As Mother to us all:
To thee, O Queen of Virgins,
O Mother meek, to thee
I run with trustful fondness,
Like child to mother's knee:
See, at thy feet a sinner,
Groaning and weeping sore—
Ah, throw thy mantle o'er me,
And let me stray no more.

Thy Son has died to save me,
And from his throne on high
His Heart this moment yearneth
For even such as I:
All, all his love remember,
And oh, remember, too,
How prompt I am to purpose,
How slow and frail to do:

Yet, scorn not my petitions,
But patiently give ear ;
And help me, O my Mother,
Most loving and most dear.

IV. NAME OF MARY: FROM THE ITALIAN OF HENRY NOZZI, S.J.: 1808–1857.

Mary : that holy name hath scarcely died
Upon my lips, that name immaculate,
When my torn heart regains its placid state,
And in mine eyes the tears of grief are dried.
Mary : I name her, and a boundless tide
Of rapture doth my bosom inundate
With sweetness so unutterably great
That to contain it all its strength is tried.
Mary : that name secure shall bear me on
Amid life's perils ; in that mighty name
The menaces of fortune I defy.
And when my term of mortal life is gone,
In my last moments Mary's help I'll claim—
Her name upon my lips, content I'll die.

V. A THOUGHT FROM CARDINAL NEWMAN.

The world shines bright for inexperienced eyes,
And death seems distant to the gay and strong,
And in the youthful heart proud fancies throng,
And only present good can nature prize.
How then shall youth o'er these low vapours rise,
And climb the upward path, so steep and long ?
And how, amid earth's sights and sounds of wrong,
Walk with pure heart, and face raised to the skies ?
By gazing on the Infinitely Good,
Whose love must quell, or hallow every other—
By living in the shadow of the Rood,

For he that hangs there is our Elder Brother,
Who dying gave to us himself as food,
And his own Mother as our nursing Mother.

NOTE.

No. V. In the last of his 'Discourses to Mixed Congregations,' Dr. Newman calls the Blessed Virgin the Mother of Emmanuel, and says: 'It is the boast of the Catholic Religion that it has the gift of making the young heart chaste; and why is this, but that it gives us Jesus for our food and Mary for our nursing Mother?' (Author.)

Dialogue between the Child Jesus and his Virgin Mother

M. CASIMIR SARBIEWSKI, S.J.: 1595–1640.

TRANSLATED (1891) *BY RICHARD WILTON, M.A.*

CHILD: O VIRGIN, fairer than the stars on high,
Than gold more glittering, and than glass more bright
Dearer than purple to the eye;
Outvying roses white.

VIRGIN: Jesus, more beauteous than the crimson west,
Than the moon's splendour, or the noon-day glow;
Dearer than fields with springtide blest;
Purer than winter snow.

CHILD: So gleamest thou as some twin-fountain cool
Which, having danced around green Heshbon's hill,
Seeks now some far sequestered pool,
Alone and wondrous still.

VIRGIN: So shinest thou as twin-doves milky white
Shine in our eyes, when by some riverside
Or garden streamlet they alight,
And peacefully abide.

CHILD: Thy noble locks thy graceful shoulders crown
Like purple robes dipt in a Lydian fount,
Or long-fleeced wild goats wandering down
From Gilead's topmost mount.

VIRGIN: Thy lovely circling hair thy face illumes
As a green crest the tapering palm entwines,
Or as in twilight of its plumes,
The shadowy raven shines.

CHILD: Words, Virgin, from thy lips as softly flow
As honeyed streams from combs Hyblæan run,
Or bridal veils let loose fall low,
The fillets being undone.

VIRGIN: Son, with thy words thy lips as sweetly swim
As cups that overflow with Cæcuban,
Or wet with dews at evening dim
The lilies glimmer wan.

CHILD: Thy breasts are like to roe-deer that are twins,
Which crop the lilies with their tender lips,
When panting, the tired day begins
To seek the night's eclipse.

VIRGIN: Son, thy breasts vie with clusters of the vine,
Clusters which in green Cyprus see the light,
Or which in fair Engaddi shine
Amid its gardens bright.

CHILD: Whoever thy fair cheeks, O Maid, beholds
Finds rosy apples in a branching tree;
While other fruits thy heart enfolds
More beautiful to see.

VIRGIN: Whoever, Child, upon thy cheeks shall gaze
Shall see a picture drawn with cunning hand,
Where rose and lily, with blent rays,
In wondrous beauty stand.

CHILD: Who loves thee not, the wild beasts' nature shares,
The tiger's cruelty, the leopard's ire;
Is more implacable than bears;
Than angry snakes more dire.

VIRGIN: Who loves thee not, is harder than a stone;
Rougher than rocks; than winds more wanton-wild;
Deafer than seas that toss and moan;
Than raging flames less mild.

Speech of 'the Maid of Orleans'

BEFORE CHARLES VII., THE ARCHBISHOP OF RHEIMS, AND THE FRENCH COURT: ACT I. SCENE X. OF THE DRAMA.

J. C. F. VON SCHILLER: 1759–1805.

TRANSLATED BY ANNA SWANWICK.

FROM 'SCHILLER'S WORKS,' 1848.

ARCHBISHOP.

WHO art thou, wonderful and holy Maid?
What favoured region bore thee? What blest pair,
Beloved of heaven, may claim thee as their child?

JOHANNA.

Most Reverend Father, I am named Johanna:
I am a shepherd's lowly daughter, born

In Dom Remi, a village of my king,
Included in the diocese of Toul,
And from a child I kept my father's sheep.
And much and frequently I heard them tell
Of the strange islanders, who o'er the sea
Had come to make us slaves, and on us force
A foreign lord, who loveth not the people ;
How the great city, Paris, they had seized,
And had usurped dominion o'er the realm.
Then, earnestly God's Mother I implored
To save us from the shame of foreign chains,
And to preserve to us our lawful king.
Not distant from my native village stands
An ancient Image of the Virgin Blest,
To which the pious pilgrims oft repaired ;
Hard by a holy oak, of blessed power,
Standeth, far famed through wonders manifold.
Beneath the oak's broad shade I loved to sit,
Tending my flock—my heart still drew me there.
And if by chance among the desert hills
A lambkin strayed, 'twas shown me in a dream,
When in the shadow of this oak I slept.

And once, when, through the night beneath this tree,
In pious adoration I had sat
Resisting sleep, the Holy One appeared,
Bearing a sword and banner, otherwise
Clad like a shepherdess ; and thus she spake :
'"Tis I. Arise, Johanna ; leave thy flock :
The Lord appoints thee to another task.
Receive this banner. Gird thee with this sword :
Therewith exterminate my people's foes.
Conduct to Rheims thy royal master's son ;
And crown him with the kingly diadem.'
And I made answer : 'How may I presume

To undertake such deeds, a tender maid,
Unpractised in the dreadful art of war?'
And she replied: 'A maiden pure and chaste
Achieves whate'er on earth is glorious,
If she to earthly love ne'er yields her heart.
Look upon me, a Virgin, like thyself:
I to the Christ, the Lord Divine, gave birth,
And am myself divine.' Mine eyelids then
She touched; and when I upward turned my gaze,
Heaven's wide expanse was filled with angel-boys,
Who bore white lilies in their hands, while tones
Of sweetest music floated through the air.

And thus, on three successive nights appeared
The Holy One, and cried: 'Arise, Johanna;
The Lord appoints thee to another task.'
And when the third night she revealed herself,
Wrathful she seemed, and chiding spake these words:
'Obedience, woman's duty here on earth;
Severe endurance is her heavy doom;
She must be purified through discipline;
Who serveth here is glorified above.'
While thus she spake, she let her shepherd garb
Fall from her, and as the Queen of Heaven stood forth,
Enshrined in radiant light, whilst golden clouds
Upbore her slowly to the realms of bliss.

ARCHBISHOP.

Before divine credentials such as these
Each doubt of earthly prudence must subside.
Her deeds attest the truth of what she speaks;
For God alone such wonders can achieve.

Songs, Hymns, and Prayers in Metre

English, Irish, American

I. SONG.

JAMES A. DOMINIC AYLWARD, O.P.: 1813–1872.

O THOU, of flowers the fairest
In Eden's groves that grow,
The scented sweets thou bearest
Shed down upon us now—
Flower of Eden, hail.

From out thy starry bower
Look down, O Mother mild,
Thy single glance hath power
To cheer our desert wild—
Flower of Eden, hail.

O thou, the best and brightest
Of all the starry train,
'Tis thou that safely lightest
Our path across the main—
Star of Ocean, hail.

Thy beams so pure and tender,
Still guide us on our way,
Till on us bursts the splendour
Of heaven's eternal day.
Star of Ocean, hail.

II. SICILIAN HYMN.

J. RICHARD BEST: 1805–1885.

FROM 'CHURCH HYMNS,' 1849.

O THOU most holy One,
Pure, bright and lowly One,
Dearest Virgin, Mary mild;
Mother beloved of all,
Honoured, approved of all,
Pray for, pray for me, pray for thy child.

Whom should we venerate,
Whom should we supplicate,
Where for hope and solace flee?
Thou wilt receive our prayer,
Thou wilt present it there,
Where God welcomes all coming from thee.

To God thou gavest birth;
O'er all the realms of earth,
Mary, now extends thy sway:
What thou dost recommend
To that God will attend—
How can Christ his dear Mother gainsay?

Through all the realms of heaven,
Honour to thee is given;
Mighty Queen of angels thou:
But from thy starry throne,
Mary, look kindly down—
'Tis thy children who sing to thee now.

Look down and help us here;
Take from us doubt and fear;
Give us, give us all we need:
Teach us to hope in thee
Fondly, confidingly—
Help of Christians, plead for us, plead.

III. PILGRIM'S HYMN.

THOMAS DAVIS: 1814–1845.

FROM SIR C. GAVAN DUFFY'S 'LIFE OF THOMAS DAVIS, THE IRISH PATRIOT,' 1890.

Found amongst his papers, in the hand-writing of the Author.

FADING, still fading, the last beam is shining ;
'Ave, Maria,' day is declining ;
Safety and innocence fly with the light,
Temptation and danger walk forth with the night ;
From the fall of the shade till the matin shall chime,
Shield us from danger and save us from crime :
'Ave, Maria ; audi nos.'

'Ave, Maria,' hear when we call,
Mother of him who is Brother to all ;
Feeble and failing, we trust in thy might ;
In doubting and darkness thy love be our light ;
Let us sleep on thy breast, while the night-taper burns ;
And wake in thine arms, when the morning returns :
'Ave, Maria ; audi nos.'

IV. A MAY-DAY SONG.

ALFRED GURNEY, M.A.

FROM 'THE VISION OF THE EUCHARIST,' 1882.

THE happy birds 'Te Deum' sing,
'Tis Mary's month of May,
Her smile turns winter into spring,
And darkness into day ;
And there's a fragrance in the air,
The bells their music make,
And oh, the world is bright and fair,
And all for Mary's sake.

Where'er we seek the Holy Child,
At every sacred spot,
We meet the Mother Undefiled,
Who shun her seek him not ;
At cloistered Nazareth we see,
At haunted Bethlehem,
The throne of Jesus, Mary's knee,
Her smile, his diadem.

The Daughter, Mother, Spouse of God,
None silence her appeal
Who seek to tread where Jesus trod,
What Jesus felt to feel ;
O Virgin-born, from thee we learn
To love thy Mother dear—
Her teach us duly to discern
And rightly to revere.

* * *

How many are the thoughts that throng
On faithful souls to-day ;
All year we sing our Lady's song,
'Tis still the song of May :
'Magnificat'—oh, may we feel
That rapture more and more,
And chiefly, Lord, what time we kneel
Thine altar-throne before.

* * *

Yes, Mary's month has come again,
The merry month of May ;
And sufferers forget their pain,
And sorrows flee away,
And joys return ; the hearts whose moan
Was desolate erewhile
Are blithe and gay once more, they own
The charm of Mary's smile.

Thy Son our Brother is, and we,
Whatever may betide,
A Mother, Mary, have in thee,
A guardian and a guide ;
Thy smiles a tale of gladness tell
No words can ever say ;
If but like thee we love him well,
The year will all be May.

'All hail'—an angel spake the words
We lovingly repeat—
The song-notes of the singing birds,
They are not half so sweet ;
This is a music that endures,
It cannot pass away,
For Mary's children it ensures
A never-ending May.

V. HYMN FOR THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

REGINALD HEBER : 1783–1826.

FROM 'HYMNS OF THE YEAR,' 1827.

VIRGIN-BORN, we bow before thee ;
Blessed was the womb that bore thee ;
Mary, Mother, meek and mild—
Blessed was she in her Child.
Blessed was the breast that fed thee ;
Blessed was the hand that led thee ;
Blessed was the Parent's eye
That watched thy slumbering infancy.
Blessed she by all creation,
Who brought forth the World's Salvation ;
And blessed they, for ever blest,
Who love thee most and serve thee best.

VI. HYMN.

GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA: 1452–1498.

TRANSLATED BY R. R. MADDEN, M.D.: 1798–1886.

FROM 'THE LIFE OF SAVONAROLA,' 1850.

A hymn composed during the Great Plague in Florence.

O STAR of Galilee,
Shining o'er this earth's dark sea,
Shed thy glorious light on me.

Queen of Clemency and Love,
Be my Advocate above,
And through Christ all sin remove.

When the angel called thee blest,
And with transports filled thy breast,
'Twas thy Lord became thy guest.

Earth's purest Creature thou,
In the heavens exulting now,
With a halo round thy brow.

Beauty beams in every trace
Of the Virgin-Mother's face,
Full of glory and of grace—

A Beacon to the just,
To the sinner Hope and Trust,
Joy of the angel-host.

Ever-glorified, thy throne
Is where thy blessed Son
Doth reign: through him alone,

All pestilence shall cease,
And sin and strife decrease,
And the kingdom come of peace.

VII. FISHERMAN'S PRAYER.

TIMOTHY DANIEL SULLIVAN.

THE sun is setting angrily ;
In threatening gusts the wind is blowing ;
Holy Mary, Star of the Sea,
Speed our small bark fast and free
O'er the homeward way we are going.

We left the land as the morning bright
Purpled the smooth sea all before us ;
We prayed to God, and our hearts were light,
We placed our bark in thy saving sight,
And knew thou wouldst well watch o'er us.

But now the sun sets angrily,
From black, wild clouds the wind is blowing ;
Holy Mary, Star of the Sea,
Send our small bark fast and free
O'er the darkling way we are going.

We fished the deep the livelong day ;
The waves were rich through God's good pleasure ;
We ventured far from our own bright bay,
And lingered late—we fain would stay
Till filled with the shining treasure.

But now the night falls threateningly,
The sea runs high with the fierce wind blowing ;
Holy Mary, Star of the Sea,
Our Light, our Guide, our Safety be
O'er the stormy way we are going.

We pass the point where the tempest's strain
Is lightened off by the land's high cover ;
Our village lights shine out again—
I know mine own in my window-pane,
And the tall church towering over,

Holy Mary, Star of the Sea,
With grateful love our hearts are glowing ;
Behold, we bless thy Son and thee ;
Oh, still our light and safety be
O'er the last dread course we are going.

VIII. MAY-SONG.

RICHARD STORRS WILLIS.

Of all the queens in month of May
Proclaimed and crowned with flowers,
Oh, none could ever once compare
With her we name as ours :
'Ave, Madonna,' graced o'er all,
The first with us alway ;
With pious minds and heedful hands
We crown thee Queen of the May.

O Star of Ocean, bend a ray
To orbs the light that crave ;
Our bark is tossed ; oh, intercede
With him who stilled the wave :
Ah, well-assured celestial aid
By lips like thine implored ;
For how were lightly aught denied
The Mother of our Lord ?

Sweet month of Mary, festal May,
What joy thy coming stirs ;
Yet with our gladness blends a sigh,
For lives as pure as hers :
O Virgin-Patron of our land ;
Oh, voice for aid to pray ;
'Ave, Madonna,' 'tis thy month ;
We crown thee Queen of the May.

From 'Yeruti and Monna'

'A TALE OF PARAGUAY': CANTO II. STANZAS 48–58.

ROBERT SOUTHEY: 1774–1843.

Quiara and Monnema were the sole survivors of a tribe who had escaped the ravages of small-pox. The wife becomes the mother of Yeruti and Monna; and after the death of her husband, Monnema instructs her children in the traditions and customs of their tribe. One day she recalls to mind the coming of the ministers of the Great Spirit from across the world of waters to the Red-Man, describes a portion of their teaching, and excites a desire in the children to meet these ministers. (Author.)

A DIFFERENT sentiment within them stirred
When Monnema recalled to mind one day,
Imperfectly, what she had sometimes heard
In childhood, long ago, the elders say:
Almost from memory had it passed away—
How there appeared, amid the woodlands, men
Whom the Great Spirit sent there to convey
His gracious will: but little heed she then
Had given, and like a dream it now recurred again.

But these young questioners from time to time
Called up the long-forgotten theme anew.
Strange men they were, from some remotest clime,
She said, of different speech, uncouth to view,
Having hair upon their face, and white in hue:
Across the world of waters wide they came
Devotedly the Father's work to do,
And seek the Red-Men out, and in his name
His merciful laws and love and promises proclaim.

They served a Maid more beautiful than tongue
Could tell, or heart conceive. Of human race,
All heavenly as that Virgin was, she sprung:

But, for her beauty and celestial grace,
Being one in whose pure elements no trace
Had e'er inhered of sin, or mortal stain,
The highest heaven was now her dwelling place ;
There as a Queen divine she held her reign,
And there, in endless joy, for ever would remain.

Her feet upon the crescent moon were set ;
And moving in their order round her head,
The stars compose her sparkling coronet.
There, at her breast, the Virgin-Mother fed
A Babe Divine, who was to judge the dead —
Such power the Spirit gave this aweful Child.
Severe he was, and in his anger dread ;
Yet alway at his Mother's will grew mild,
So well did he obey that Maiden Undefiled.

Sometimes she had descended from above
To visit her true votaries, and requite
Such as had served her well. And for her love,
These bearded men, forsaking all delight,
With labour long and dangers infinite,
Across the great blue waters came, and sought
The Red-Man here, to win them, if they might,
From bloody ways—rejoiced to profit aught
Even when, with their own lives, the benefit was bought.

For trusting in this heavenly Maiden's grace,
It was for them a joyful thing to die,
As men who went to have their happy place
With her, and with that Holy Child, on high,
In fields of bliss above the starry sky,
In glory, at the Virgin-Mother's feet :
And all who kept their lessons faithfully
An everlasting guerdon there would meet,
When death had led their souls to that celestial seat.

On earth they offered, too, an easy life
To those who their mild lessons would obey
Exempt from want, from danger and from strife ;
And from the forest leading them away,
They placed them underneath this Virgin's sway,
A numerous fellowship, in peace to dwell ;
Their high and happy office there to pay
Devotions due, which she requited well—
Their heavenly Guardian she, in whatsoe'er befell.

Thus, Monnema remembered, it was told
By one who in his hot and headstrong youth
Had left her happy service ; but when old,
Lamented oft with unavailing ruth,
And thoughts which sharper than a serpent's tooth
Pierced him, that he had changed that peaceful place
For the fierce freedom and the ways uncouth
Of their wild life, and lost that Lady's grace ;
Wherefore, he had no hope to see in heaven her face.

* * *

Such tales excited in Yeruti's heart
A stirring hope that haply he might meet
Some minister of heaven : and many a part
Untrod before of that wild wood retreat
Did he, with indefatigable feet,
Explore ; yet ever from the fruitless quest
Returned at evening to his native seat,
By daily disappointment undeprest—
So buoyant was the hope that filled his youthful breast.

Seven Lyrics on the Life of our Lady

ROBERT SOUTHWELL, S.J.: 1560–1595.

FROM 'MÆNONIÆ; CERTAIN EXCELLENT POEMS AND SPIRITUAL HYMNS.'

I. HER CONCEPTION.

Our second Eve puts on her mortal shroud,
Earth breeds a heaven for God's new dwelling-place;
Now riseth up Elias' little cloud,
That growing shall distill the shower of grace;
Her being now begins who, ere she end,
Shall bring the good that shall our evil mend.

Both grace and nature did their force unite
To make this Babe the sum of all their best;
Our most, her least; our million, but her mite—
She was at easiest rate worth all the rest:
What grace to men, or angels, God did part,
Was all united in this Infant's heart.

Four only wights bred without fault are named,
And all the rest conceivèd were in sin;
Without both man and wife was Adam framed;
Of man, but not of wife, did Eve begin;
Wife without touch of man Christ's Mother was;
Of man and wife this Babe was bred in grace.

II. HER NATIVITY.

Joy in the rising of our orient Star,
That shall bring forth the Sun that lent her light;
Joy in the peace that shall conclude our war,
And soon rebate the edge of Satan's spite;
Load-star of all engulphed in worldly waves,
The Card and Compass that from shipwreck saves.

The patriarchs and prophets were the flowers
  Which time by course of ages did distill,
And culled into this little Cloud the showers
  Whose gracious drops the world with joy shall fill :
    Whose moisture suppleth every soul with grace,
    And bringeth life to Adam's dying race.

For God, on earth, she is the royal Throne ;
  The chosen Cloth to make his mortal weed ;
The Quarry to cut out our Corner-stone ;
  Soil full of fruit, yet free from mortal seed ;
    For heavenly flower, she is the Jesse-rod—
    The Child of man, the Parent of a God.

III. HER ESPOUSALS.

Wife did she live, yet Virgin did she die ;
  Untouched of man, yet Mother of a Son ;
To save herself and Child from fatal lie,
  To end the web whereof the thread was spun,
    In marriage knots to Joseph she was tied—
    Unwonted works with wonted veils to hide.

God lent his Paradise to Joseph's care,
  Wherein he was to plant the Tree of Life ;
His Son, of Joseph's Child the title bare,
  Just cause to make the Mother Joseph's Wife.
    O blessèd man, betrothed to such a Spouse,
    More blessed to live with such a Child in house.

No carnal love this sacred league procured,
  All vain delights were far from their assent ;
Though both in wedlock-bands themselves assured,
  Yet strait by vow they sealed their chaste intent :
    Thus had she virgins', wives', and widows' crown,
    And by chaste child-birth doubled her renown.

IV. HER SALUTATION.

Spell Eva back and 'Ave' shall you find ;
The first began, the last reversed our harms :
An angel's witching words did Eva blind ;
An angel's Ave disenchants the charms :
Death first by woman's weakness entered in ;
In Woman's virtue life doth now begin.

O Virgin-breast, the heavens to thee incline,
In thee their joy and sovereign they agnize ;
Too mean their glory is to match with thine,
Whose chaste receipt God more than heaven did prize.
Hail, fairest Heaven, that heaven and earth dost bless,
Where virtues' stars, God's sun of justice is.

With haughty mind to Godhead man aspired,
And was by pride from place of pleasure chased ;
With loving mind our manhead God desired,
And us by love in greater pleasure placed :
Man labouring to ascend procured our fall ;
God yielding to descend cut off our thrall.

V. HER VISITATION.

Proclaimèd Queen and Mother of a God,
The Light of earth, the Sovereign of saints,
With pilgrim foot up tiring hills she trod,
And heavenly stile with handmaids' toil acquaints ;
Her youth to age, her health to sick she lends ;
Her heart to God, to neighbour hand she bends.

A Prince she is, and mightier Prince doth bear,
Yet pomp of princely train she would not have ;
But doubtless, heavenly choirs attendant were
Her Child from harm, herself from fall to save :
Word to the voice, song to the tune she brings,
The voice her word, the tune her ditty sings.

Eternal lights enclosèd in her breast
Shot out such piercing beams of burning love,
That when her voice her cousin's ears possessed
The force thereof did force her babe to move :
With secret signs the children greet each other ;
But open praise each leaveth to his mother.

VI. HER DEATH.

Weep, living things, of life the Mother dies ;
The world doth lose the sum of all her bliss,
The Queen of earth, the Empress of the skies ;
By Mary's death mankind an orphan is.
Let Nature weep ; yea, let all graces moan,
Their glory, grace, and gifts die all in one.

It was no death to her, but to her woe
By which her joys began, her griefs did end ;
Death was to her a friend, to us a foe,
Life of whose lives did on her life depend :
Not prey of death, but praise to death she was,
Whose ugly shape seemed glorious in her face.

Her face a heaven ; two planets were her eyes,
Whose gracious light did make our clearest day ;
But one such heaven there was, and lo, it dies,
Death's dark eclipse hath dimmèd every ray :
Sun, hide thy light, thy beams untimely shine ;
True light since we have lost, we crave not thine.

VII. HER ASSUMPTION.

If sin be captive, grace must find release ;
From curse of sin the innocent is free ;
Tomb, prison is for sinners that decease ;
No tomb, but throne to guiltless doth agree :
Though thralls of sin lie lingering in their grave,
Yet faultless corpse, with soul, reward must have.

The dazzled eye doth dimmèd light require,
And dying sights repose in shrouding shades ;
But eagles' eyes to brightest light aspire,
And living looks delight in lofty glades :
Faint-winged fowl by ground doth faintly fly,
Our princely Eagle mounts unto the sky.

Gem to her worth, Spouse to her Love ascends,
Prince to her throne, Queen to her heavenly King,
Whose court with solemn pomp on her attends,
And choirs of saints with greeting notes do sing :
Earth rendereth up her undeservèd prey ;
Heaven claims the right, and bears the prize away.

From 'Sonnets chiefly Astronomical'

1856.

JAMES A. STOTHERT: 1817–1882.

I. MORNING STAR.

Star of the Morn, o'er yonder purple hill
Reigning alone, amidst a wintry sky ;
See, one by one, the lamps of midnight die
Before the rising dawn ; thou reignest still,
Bright herald of diviner lights which fill
The rosy east ; in heaven a lonely eye,
Until his burning car approaches nigh,
Who routs a million phantom-shapes of ill.
Before his face alone thy radiance pales,
Clear Star of Hope, propitious Eye of Morn,
Herald of Sunshine to a world forlorn :
Thy stainless rising all creation hails ;
Thy light is his ; his countenance like thine ;
Thy face the mirror of his rays divine.

II. EVENING STAR.

MIRRORED in ocean's calm, thou lingerest
Bright Pilgrim, travelling the western heaven ;
Our Sun is gone ; yet for a space 'tis given
To watch with thee, our soon-departing guest.
Through summer clouds he passed into his rest ;
Dark shadows o'er our widowed hearts were driven
Tracing his path through crimson glories riven :
Thy lustrous orb still reigning in the west,
Not wholly gone, he visits us in thee ;
Beneath thy ray we feel him not so far
In depths of light, where glowing seraphs burn,
Through thy pure beam reflected o'er that sea.
Tranquil thy setting, Memory's lingering Star ;
With thee departs our joy, till he return.

III. STAR OF LOVE.

THE king of day unveiled, when skies are clear,
Thy path assigned may cross his noon-tide face ;
Our eyes, awaiting thee, may gauge the space
Which severs thine from his remoter sphere,
And ours from both—how far beyond, and yet how near.
Thee, millions hail ; in every distant place
The Star of Love, to each admiring race,
Throughout all times, in thee, united here.
The same, thou reignest in the flushing dawn ;
Or sinking in the west at golden eve,
The glad Precursor of a day new-born ;
Or hovering o'er the shadowy curtains drawn
Across the path, where late he took his leave ;
Glory of age mature, or tender morn.

NOTES.

Sonnet I. The title of the 'Morning Star' is sometimes given to the Holy Virgin, Mother of Jesus, in remembrance of her

immediately preceding his rising upon the world in his Incarnation. Sonnet II. Our Lady is also called the 'Evening Star' in remembrance of her stay on earth for some time after the Ascension of her Son. Sonnet III. By the transits of Venus, which occur only at long intervals, across the face of the sun, astronomers are enabled, approximately, to measure the sun's distance both from her and our earth. The eyes of all places and of all times are centred in admiration of this beautiful object in the heavens; which, though seen at one time before the sun, and at another time after him, is always the same. It is not difficult to apply these facts of nature, in the way of parable, to our Divine Lord and his Blessed Mother. (Mainly from the Author.)

Syriac and Armenian Hymns

WILLIAM HENRY KENT, O.S.C.

FROM 'THE AVE MARIA,' NOTRE DAME, U.S.A., 1892.

I. HYMN TO OUR LADY.

WRITTEN BY ST. EPHREM, THE SYRIAN, IN THE FOURTH CENTURY.

Now the holy Maiden calls me,
Bids me sing her wondrous story.
Son Divine, be thou my helper,
With thy gifts my harp enriching,
So that I may sing thy Mother,
Paint her picture full of beauty.
See, the Maiden womb conceiveth;
See, the Maiden breast is fruitful;
Wonder far surpassing nature—
Mother's milk and Maiden brightness,
All at once, in one pure body.
Wonders that no tongue can utter—
See, her Son the Virgin beareth.
Lo, she gives her milk to feed him,

Food to him who feedeth all things.
See, her tender knees support him—
Him whose power upholdeth all things.
Still a Maid and still a Mother,
What is there, we may not call her?
Fair in soul, in body holy;
Pure her mind and clear her judgment;
And her thoughts exceeding perfect.
She is chaste and she is prudent;
Fair in form and full of beauty.
Maidens all, rejoice in Mary,
Glad that she, a Maid, conceiveth,
Bearing him who beareth all things;
And in him the race of Adam
From its bondage is delivered.
Let him too rejoice in Mary—
Adam, whom the serpent wounded.
Lo, she brings a Fruit, and feeds him,
And he tramples on the serpent;
For that Fruit gives strength, and heals him
From the serpent's deadly wounding.
Priests, rejoice in her, the blest One,
Bearing our great Priest and Victim,
Freeing you from sacrifices.
He himself becomes our Victim,
Reconciles us to his Father.
Prophets all, rejoice in Mary;
For in her your songs are ended,
All your prophecies are perfect,
All your words are proved and strengthened.
Patriarchs all, rejoice in Mary;
See, she takes your promised blessing;
In her Son, she makes you perfect—
Priests and saints and seers he hallows.

For the bitter fruit our mother
Plucked from off the tree of knowledge,
See, the sweet Fruit Mary gives us,
Wherewith all the world is sweetened.
Now the Tree of Life, once hidden
In the midst of Eden's garden,
Grows in Mary, springeth from her,
Far and wide its sweet fruits sending ;
And the whole creation resteth
In the shadow of its branches.
Mary weaves the robe of glory,
Gives it to her father Adam,
Who mid Eden's trees was naked,
Clothing him with peace and beauty.
Whom the wife o'erthrew the Daughter
Lifteth, and his heart is gladdened.
Eve and Satan leagued together
Dug the pit for Adam's ruin.
Mary with the angel speaketh,
And from out the deep, they lift him,
By the mystery hid for ages,
Come to light for Adam's healing.
Now the Virgin-Vine hath borne us
Grapes, that make the Wine of sweetness,
Where our parents, Eve and Adam,
Find true comfort in their sorrow,
Taste the drink of life and healing,
And their woes are lost in gladness.

II. HYMN ON THE ANNUNCIATION.

WRITTEN BY ST. NERSES, THE ARMENIAN, IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

Mary, Mother of our Maker,
Daughter sprung from kingly David,

Bearing for us the New Adam,
Ancient Adam's race renewing.
God's true Mother we confess thee ;
Hail, as God, the Child thou bearest ;
With the angel's words we greet thee,
Echoing his note of gladness.
Dwelling-place of Light, be gladsome ;
Temple, where the true Sun dwelleth ;
Throne of God, rejoice, that bearest
Him, the Word of the Almighty.
Heaven, exalted o'er the heavens
Than the cherubim far higher ;
From the soaring seraph's pinion
Is thy wondrous mystery hidden.
Home of him that none may compass ;
Hostel, where the Sun finds resting ;
Dwelling of the Fire of Glory,
Where the Word finds fleshly clothing.
Seers of old in figures saw thee ;
Moses' Bush which flames consumed not
Great Isaias' Virgin bearing,
And Ezechiel's fastened Portal.
Daniel's great Stone-bearing Mountain ;
Solomon's fair Hill of Incense ;
Fountain sealed for him that keeps it ;
Garden closed for him that plants it.
Gideon in the Fleece beheld thee ;
David saw the Rain descending ;
And Micheas, Bethlehem's glory
Saw, and said, 'from thence he cometh.'
Noah's Ark, the true, the living ;
Tent of Abraham, our father ;
Ark of Covenant and Mercy ;
Lamp, where wondrous light is burning.

God's own Garden, fair with blossoms ;
Spikenard of the Spirit's sweetness ;
Valley, where the lily bloometh ;
Fountain, whence the four streams issue ;
Censer of the sweetest incense
Where the fourfold spices mingle,
Whence amid the saints in glory,
Like sweet smoke thy prayer ascendeth.
Lo, we pray thee, Life's own Mother,
From the stain of sin to cleanse us,
By thy prayer to God our Maker—
Unto whom the praise and glory.

III. HYMN ON THE FEAST OF THE MIGRATION OF OUR LADY.

WRITTEN BY ST. NERSES, THE ARMENIAN, IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

The Armenian Liturgy treats the 'Migration,' or Assumption, as a counterpart of the feast of the Annunciation ; and makes the angel Gabriel appear to our Blessed Lady with the summons to the heavenly crown, even as he came with the first glad tidings. (Translator.)

Tis the day the angel Gabriel to the Holy Maid came down,
Bearing her the palm of triumph, bringing her the victor's crown ;
'Tis the day he came to call her to the Everlasting Lord—
Her, the Most High's chosen Dwelling, her, the Temple of the Word.
Gathered at the Spirit's summons, came the apostles one and all,
With the band of holy maidens, faithful to the Master's call.

Then the angel-hosts were humbled, in their glory bending down,
While the Word, the One-Begotten, called his Mother to her crown ;
Till she heard and mounted upward, like the lightning in her flight,
Through the ranks of purest spirits passing to the heavenly height.
'Tis the day they took her body, pure and virginal and fair ;
Gave it to the earth in keeping ; laid their stainless treasure there.
See, the tomb wherein they laid her ; round about it angels throng ;
All around they sound the heavenly music of their choral song ;
While the voices of the apostles mingle with the hymn they raise,
And the bands of holy maidens sing the Maiden-Mother's praise.
'Tis the day that saw her passing : from the land where senses reign
Passed that fair and stainless body to the spirits' high domain.
Now with overflowing gladness, sing the angel-ranks today
While the fair and glorious Virgin 'mid them wends her heavenward way.
Gifts of healing, gifts of mercy, this glad day are freely given ;
Now the face of God's own Mother beams upon us from the heaven.
Thus we keep the Virgin's triumph ; thus our thankful songs we raise—
To the Father, Son, and Spirit, sending up our prayer and praise.

'Tale of Tintern: a May Pageant'

EDWARD CASWALL, OF THE ORATORY, M.A.: 1814–1878.

FROM THE SECOND EDITION OF A 'TALE OF TINTERN,' CANTOS VI. AND VIII. 1873.

Egwin, a Franciscan religious, summoned, from his convent on the banks of the Severn, to administer the holy Viaticum, arrives too late. On his return, passing through a wood, he prays for pardon, if it be his fault; and falling into a deep sleep, is favoured with a prophetic vision, which represents, under the figure of a jubilant procession, the recovery of England to her ancient obedience. Himself marches in the wake of the heavenly pageant in virtue of his bearing on his breast the Holy One. The vision is narrated at length, as to its composition, personality, and course; and some of its various incidents are explained by Athelstan, a former earthly friend of the monk. Amongst others is recorded one which describes how the Royal Confessor, Edward, kneels at Mary's feet, and implores her to take again the sceptre of our isle. In the morning, the friars seek the aged brother, and he is found on his knees, dead—the spirit having fled at the conclusion of the vision and the consummation of the renaissance of England.

THEN over hill and vale and mead
Began a fairer grace to spread,
On balmier wing the breeze went by,
Purer the light, more blue the sky;
And livelier still in leaf and spray
The pulse of nature seemed to play,
As though some elemental force
Were stirring at creation's source,
And clothing with a second birth
Before their time the things of earth.
The twain observed the change appear,
And knew that May's fair Queen was near.

'She comes,' cried Athelstan; and lo,
Along the summit to and fro,
Soft as the summer lightning plays,
A splendour of ethereal rays
Begins—whence, like a lovely thought
Out of quick-teeming fancies wrought,
Or the efflorescence of the morn,
Or scent from breathing meadows borne,
Virgins behind and on each side,
Appears the Eternal Spirit's Bride.
A Form of Grace, seated serene
In fashion of a Pilgrim Queen
On palfrey white of heavenly mould,
Such as that steed the saint of old
At Patmos saw, with bated breath,
Bearing the Conqueror of death;
Amidst exulting wafts of song
Sublimely sweet she came along
In dawning youth, or rather say,
In youth's undawned eternity.
Above her fair imperial head,
As in a baldachin outspread,
Dovelings their silver wings unfold,
Their silver wings bedropped with gold,
And shoaling to the sunny light,
Cross and recross in circles bright,
While side by side, two sons of day
Herald the splendour on its way,
A marvel each to human gaze,
So bright in perfect glory's blaze.
'England's and Rome's Apostles these,'
Whispered the youth, 'twin-majesties—
Augustine, who dissolved our night,
And Philip, sweetest saint in light,

Our isle's new guest. Their day the same,
In Mary equal share they claim
This morn ; Oh, see how zone in zone
Their friendly aureoles blend in one.'

* * *

Long was their gaze, one worship all
Solemn, subdued, ecstatical,
As finding such a store of bliss
In that dear mystery's abyss,
That powerless therefrom to sever,
It there must lose itself for ever.
From whence in turn such silence grew
And spread around, as never knew
Saint Francis' dear son in all
His life before ; if we might call
Silence indeed, what rather were
A super-silence—spirit of prayer
Unbreathed—such silence as befel
In that half hour most mystical,
The Apocalypse records—a sea
Of imperturbed tranquillity
Inflowing broad—whereon upborne
His soul beyond the gates of morn
Was mounting heavenward, when lo,
A stir, a movement, to and fro ;
And as in beauty peers the moon
Above the groves of Lebanon ;
Or as the flowery odours glide
In balmy mist by Carmel's side ;
Or as before your charmèd sight
In some fair garden of delight,
Forth from a lily bank should rise
The plumaged bird of Paradise ;
So, from amidst her virgins fair
Our Lady rose, an odorous air

Breathing around, and through the throng
Of saintly splendours thrid along
To the altar floor. There at the side,
In beauty knelt the Heavenly Bride,
Her arms across her bosom drawn,
Her hair upon her shoulders strawn
(As wont in Coronation-rite).
Sideways she knelt, and gave to sight
That type of virgin excellency
And intellectual majesty
Which angels worship.
Vision sweet
Of perfect Maidenhood, where meet,
From every touch of earth refined,
As in the abstractions of the mind,
All that we can of virtue guess,
All wisdom, truth and holiness,
All joy, all love, all constancy,
Blended in heavenliest unity.
Such vision as on Dante's eyes
Ne'er beamed in his own Paradise ;
Such as ne'er thrilled Correggio,
Nor e'en our blessed Angelico ;
Once only, in his youth's fair morn,
To Raphael shown in dream of dawn
And caught upon his canvas rare
To live and glow immortal there.

Thus as she knelt, the Pontiff-Saint,
Serving as sacred celebrant,
From the altar took the mystic sign
Of grace original, gifts divine,
Puissance high and glory bright,
Unblemished diadem of light ;
And with it in exultant wave,
Tracing the cross on high, first gave

A benison round ; then, on the brow
So snowy fair upturned below
The radiance laid. Forthwith, a strain
Of acclamations bursts amain ;
And our High Lady, from her knees
Rising, 'mid heavenly harmonies,
Straight to her amethystine throne
Amidst her virgins passèd on,
And so, with solemn rites complete,
Installed, assumes her glory-seat.

There as enthroned triumphantly,
She sat in beauty of majesty,
Lo, underneath the basement broad
A sky, as 'twere of opal showed,
Whereon it resting lay, as though
Self-poised in the empyrean blue,
Nor portion seemed to have at all
With this, our sublunary ball,
Save where its steps translucent shone,
Bridging the abyss. Up these anon,
Divested first of ermine fair
And England's proud regalia,
Ascends our Kingly Confessor,
Who in his hand resplendent bore
A sceptre, with whose worth might vie
No staff of earthly monarchy.
Not half so beauteous Aaron's rod,
Blooming before the ark of God,
Disclosed to raptured Israel's sight
Its growth of almond-blossoms bright,
As this its stem symmetric shows
Floriferous in varied hues ;
While at the top in pearly rays,
The dove its mystic form displays.

This bearing then, at Mary's feet
He kneels, and thus with homage meet
(So heard our monk, or seemed to hear,
A marvel all to eye and ear)
Presents it: 'Virgin-Glory, deign
Into thy hand to take again
This island's sceptre, thine before
In the Christ-loving days of yore;
For thee reserved through dismal years,
For thee, through blood and briny tears,
Long under seas of trouble tossed
It lay, and seemed for ever lost;
Now with the newly dawning time,
Reflourishing as in its prime
Again returns, Lady, to thee
The symbol of thy sovereignty.
Take it; and by its gentle sway
To better times ordain the way;
Defend the Faith; the strength subdue
Of heresy; prepare anew
A holy people, and by their aid
Illume the lands in darkness laid,
Till for what England lost of yore,
Earth's ends a hundred-fold restore.'

He ceased; but she awhile delayed,
As one who hidden secrets weighed;
Awhile with mute adoring eye
Sought inspiration from on high;
Then bends, and with a beaming face
Accepts the pledge of second grace.

NOTE.

Line 87: 'The Queen arrayed in royal robes, her hair unbound, is conducted to the Archbishop, who sits mitred in front of the High Altar.' (Rite of Coronation in the Roman Pontifical.)

'Talítha Cumí'

JOHN BRANDE MORRIS, M.A.: 1813–1880.

CHORUS OF ANGELS: ACT IV.

FROM 'TALEETHA KOOMEE: OR, THE GOSPEL PROPHECY OF THE ASSUMPTION; A DRAMA,' 1858.

THOUSANDS of centuries ere the earth
Softened her carpet for Eva's birth,
Did seraphial choirs above
Ponder in ever-abiding sheen,
What was the Coronal shaped, my Queen,
By omnipotent Filial Love?

Thousands of deluges oft entombed
All that a motherly earth unwombed
At angelical Sovereign's will:
Regents of God for a million years
Earthward attached from elder spheres
Pondered eagerly, pondered still.

Every princely intelligence gazed
When the Almighty in vision raised
Mary's throne of maternal right:
Gabriel, Oriel, Raphael
Basked with the armies of Michael
In the adorable Mother's light.

Michael's banner upreared on high,
Summoning seraphs to victory,
Brightly flashed over yawning hell:
Fiends who abhorrèd a Mother's right
Writhed at the wooden altar in sight,
As the cross on the blasted fell.

* * *

Rattle your sulphur-eyed darkness chains ;
Forge ye on anvils of angriest pains,
Bolts envenomed in angrier spite ;
Millions of ever-increasing stars
Scorned in their cradle Abaddon's wars,
Vainly levelled at Mary's right.

Vessels of wrath, were ye thirsty still
Man to engulf at Behèmoth's will?
Earth to spoil of her jewel, Eve?
Dread ye the torrent of Kishon's vale ;
Mystical Sisera, dread the Nail
Which a Woman in thee shall leave.

* * *

Every doomsday whose wrath was spent
Harm to antiquity's vale forwent,
Virgin spot in its Maker's eye :
Firmament horsemen of ominous dance
Shrunk at the echoing vale's 'Advance,'
As the chorus of stars went by.

Ages and æons had tided past—
Eve's majestical eye at last
Rose on earth for a sun of joy :
Then the Deceiver, by her deceived,
Bended his weapon ; his spite believed
It was Mary in majesty.

Enmity whetting its sting to cope
With the Almighty in flesh, could hope
A demon's hope with a demon's dread :
Bitterly cursing a race to come,
Sulkily traversed he Mary's home—
A lion he, with his wrath unfed.

When the majestical Eve appeared,
Hopeful was anger, as hatred feared,
To poison her in the vision seen :

Stung was the serpent, that creature mere,
Girded in flesh, upon angels fear
Could hurl, and crush with her foot his spleen.
Marvel we then, if a giant's slave
Stalking before him artillery gave,
Deadly barbèd for artless Eve?
Thousands of years hath his venom-dart
Widowed her soul of the chastest heart,
Which a spouse ever owned to give.
Slave of the giant, abhorrèd Death,
Tremble and listen—a Saviour's breath
Slings the 'Damsel, arise' to-day:
Tremble at Mary, the womby shrine;
Eva, rejoice thee; a Host divine
Death and issue of blood shall stay.

NOTE.

Line 18: Adorable; See Psalm xcv. 9. 'Adorate Dominum in atrio sancto ejus'; a psalm used in the Third Nocturn of the Mattins Office, on Feasts of the B.V.M. This, of course, refers to hyperdulia.

Mariana in the South

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON: 1809-1892.

FROM 'POEMS,' 1832.

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines:
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.

But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,
And 'Ave Mary,' night and morn,
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Through rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
'Madonna, sad is night and morn,'
And, 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmured she ;
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load.'
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
'Is this the form,' she made her moan,
'That won his praises night and morn?'
And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn.'

* * *

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :
She felt he was and was not there.
She woke : the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare

Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white ;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan,
More inward than at night or morn,
'Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten, and die forlorn.'

* * *

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.
'The day to night,' she made her moan,
'The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea ;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
'The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.'

Our Lady's Exile, and other Lyrics

KATHARINE TYNAN-HINKSON.

FROM 'SHAMROCKS,' 1887; AND 'BALLADS AND LYRICS,' 1891.

I. OUR LADY'S EXILE.

TWELVE years, and down on earth the time was long;
She was dreaming all alone in her leaf-framed bower,
What time the limes and almonds were in flower;
Outside the casement was a white bird's song,
Ringing and clinging; there was scent of spice
From some far opening door in Paradise.

About her were magnolias, white and red,
And palms like emerald flame went leaping up
From the poor setting of an earthen cup;
Lilies grew pale, and roses crimsonèd:
At dawn, a little angel like a child
Brought them to her, and kissed her gown, and smiled.

Such heavenly visitants were often here,
For this one brought her flowers, and that one fruit;
And here, one sitting tinkled to his lute,
Singing the songs that Lord Christ loves to hear;
And there, one floated in the gathering gloom
Like a flushed lily, or a rose in bloom.

Across the sun his birds, the cherubim,
Went flying home like distant flakes of light,
And a late lark was scaling heaven's blue height,
Seeking to trace the self-same path to him;
Then the sun setting caught her robe's white fold,
And lit her mournful eyes with sudden gold.

'How long?' she sighed. If but the door would swing,
And Michael enter in his silvery mail
And the plumed helmet, where the ringed stars pale,
And glow about his curled hair glittering,
And lean to her, and place the torch a-lit
In her tired hands that oft times longed for it.

No sign: the red hearts of the roses burned
Love-lit; a fiery moon was in the sky,
And the night-wind was trembling like a sigh;
Faint and far-off the ringdoves yearned and mourned,
And from the olives came a voice forlorn—
That bird who leans her heart upon a thorn.

II. THE ANGEL OF THE ANNUNCIATION.

Down through the village street,
Where the slanting sunlight was sweet,
Swiftly the angel came;
His face was the star of even,
When night is grey in the heaven;
His hair was a blown gold flame.

His wings were purple of bloom,
And eyed as the peacock's plume;
They trailed and flamed in the air;
Clear brows with an aureole rimmed,
The gold ring brightened and dimmed,
Now rose, now fell on his hair.

Oh, the marvellous eyes:
All strange with a rapt surprise,
They mused and dreamed as he went;
The great lids, drooping and white,
Screenèd the glory from sight;
His lips were most innocent.

His clear hands shining withal,
Bore lilies, silver and tall,
  That had grown in the pleasaunce of God ;
His robe was fashioned and spun
Of threads from the heart of the sun ;
  His feet with white fire were shod.

O friend, with the grave, white brow,
No dust of travel hast thou,
  Yet thou hast come from afar,
Beyond the sun and the moon,
Beyond the night and the noon,
  And thy brother the evening star.

He entered in at the gate
Where the law-givers sit in their state,
  Where the law-breakers shiver and quake ;
The rustling of his sweet wings,
Like music from gold harp strings,
  Or songs that the dear birds make

None saw as he passed their way ;
But the children paused in their play,
  And smiled as his feet went by :
A bird sang clear from the nest,
And a babe on its mother's breast
  Stretched hands with a small, sweet cry.

The women stood by the well,
Most grave ; and the laughter fell,
  The chatter and gossip grew mute ;
They raised their hands to their eyes—
Had the gold sun waxed in the skies ?
  Was that the voice of a lute ?

All in the stillness and heat
The angel passed through the street,
Nor pausing, nor looking behind ;
God's finger-touch on his lips ;
His great wings fire at the tips ;
His gold hair flame in the wind.

III. GOLDEN LILIES.

O DAFFODILS all aflame,
I know from whence ye came,
To warm March with your blaze :
As Gabriel went a-winging
Down pleasant country ways,
He heard your trumpets ringing.

God's Paradise this was,
With a city of rainbow glass ;
The river of life there flows ;
The tree of life there blooming
Hath many a name that glows
Like flower and fruit illuming.

But Gabriel going down,
In his gold wings and gown,
Was grave, as him bested ;
Great tidings he was bringing,
To raise the earth from dead,
And set the heaven to singing.

'Oh, young,' he said, 'is she,
God's Maid and Queen Marie' ;
He said, 'I will bring down
Those golden trumpets blowing,
And lay them on her gown,
To glad her with their showing.'

Queen Marie in her bower
Had a white lily in flower,
And Gabriel brought the gold ;
The gold lily that ever
Blowing his trumpet bold,
Proclaims her praise for ever.

IV. ASSUMPTA EST MARIA.

The Father saith, 'Welcome, my Daughter' :
Saith the Spirit, 'Welcome, my Spouse' :
What have angels and archangels brought her ?
Stars for her brows.

'Welcome, Mother,' the Son saith only,
'Welcome, Mother.' The years were slow
While she waited—the years were lonely—
The summons to go.

Twelve long years of winter and summer,
Feeding patient his altar-light,
Michael tarried—the lordly comer
Whose torch was bright.

Now, the Three in Unity claim her
Close to each in the tenderest bond ;
Now, the Three in Unity name her
Holy and fond.

Now, the angels float from the azure,
Kiss her feet and her mantle's rim ;
She looks up at her Son, her Treasure,
Hungry for him.

Little feet that were wont to falter,
Little fingers her lips once kissed :
Ages, spaces, his will can alter,
Yea, as he list.

Mother of Christ, and all men's Mother,
Where thou sittest the stars between,
Pluck his robe for his toiling brother
Stricken with sin.

Yea, the strong desire of his passion ;
Yea, the fruit of his mortal pain—
Intercede for thy mournful nation,
Mother of men.

Intercede for thy mournful nation
Toiling, stricken, seething beneath—
Yea, the strong desire of his passion
Bought with his death.

Record Typical of the Five Sorrowful Mysteries

JAMES COLLINSON: 1825–1881.

MARY'S DREAM: ANTICIPATION OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

FROM 'THE CHILD JESUS,' IN 'THE GERM,' AFTERWARDS 'ART AND POETRY,' 1850.

'I DREAMED a weary way I had to go
Alone, across an unknown land—such wastes
We sometimes see in visions of the night,
Barren and dimly lighted. There was not
A tree in sight, save one seared leafless trunk,
Like a rude cross ; and scattered here and there,

A shrivelled thistle grew. The grass was dead,
And the starved soil glared through its scanty tufts
In bare and chalky patches, cracked and hot,
Chafing my tired feet, that caught upon
Its parched surface. For a thirsty sun
Had sucked all moisture from the ground it burned,
And red and glowing, stared upon me like
A furnace-eye, when all the flame is spent.

'I felt it was a dream ; and so I tried
To close my eyes, and shut it out from sight.
Then sitting down, I hid my face ; but this
Only increased the dread ; and so I gazed
With open eyes into my dream again.
The mists had thickened, and had grown quite black
Over the sun ; and darkness closed round me.
(Thy Father said it thundered towards the morn.)
But soon, far off, I saw a dull green light
Break through the clouds, which fell across the earth
Like death upon a bad man's upturned face.
Sudden it burst with fifty forkèd darts
In one white flash, so dazzling bright it seemed
To hide the landscape in one blaze of light.
When the loud crash that came down with it had
Rolled its long echo into stillness, through
The calm dark silence came a plaintive sound ;
And, looking towards the tree, I saw that it
Was scorchèd with the lightning ; and there stood,
Close to its foot, a solitary sheep,
Bleating upon the edge of a deep pit,
Unseen till now, choked up with briars and thorns :
And into this a little snow-white lamb,
Like to thine own, had fallen. It was dead
And cold, and must have lain there very long ;
While all the time, the mother had stood by,

Helpless, and moaning with a piteous bleat.
The lamb had struggled much to free itself,
For many cruel thorns had torn its head
And bleeding feet ; and one had pierced its side,
From which flowed blood and water. Strange the things
We see in dreams, and hard to understand—
For stooping down to raise its lifeless head,
I thought it changed into the quiet face
Of my own Child.
'Then I awoke, and saw
The dim moon shining through the watery clouds
On thee awake, within thy little bed.'

'Ancilla Domini'

AUBREY DE VERE.

FROM 'MAY CAROLS,' 1889.

I. PROTEVANGELION.

When from their lurking place the Voice
Of God dragged forth that fallen pair,
Still seemed the garden to rejoice ;
The sinless Eden still was fair.

They, they alone, whose light of grace
But late made Paradise look dim,
Stood now, a blot upon its face,
Before their God ; nor gazed on him.

They glanced not up ; or they had seen
In that severe, death-dooming eye
Unutterable depths serene
Of sadly piercing sympathy.

Not them alone that Eye beheld,
But by their side, that other twain,
In whom the race whose doom was knelled
Once more should rise, once more should reign.

It saw that Infant crowned with blood—
And her from whose predestined breast
That Infant ruled the worlds. She stood
Her foot upon the serpent's crest.

Voice of primeval prophecy,
Of all the Gospels head and heart,
With him, her Son and Saviour, she
Possessed, that hour, in thee a part.

II. DEI GENITRIX.

I SEE him : on thy lap he lies
'Mid that Judæan stable's gloom :
Oh, sweet, Oh, awful Sacrifice ;
He smiles in sleep, yet knows the doom.

Thou gav'st him life : but was not this
That life which knows no parting breath?
Unmeasured life? unwaning bliss?
Dread Priestess, lo, thou gav'st him death.

Beneath the tree thy Mother stood ;
Beneath the cross thou too shalt stand—
O tree of life, O bleeding rood,
Thy shadow stretches far its hand.

That God who made the sun and moon,
In swaddling bands lies dumb and bound—
Love's Captive, darker prison soon
Awaits thee in the garden ground.

He wakens : Paradise looks forth
Beyond the portals of the grave.
Life, life thou gavest—life to earth,
Not him : thine Infant dies to save.

III. MOTHER OF ORPHANS.

As children when, with heavy tread,
Men sad of face, unseen before,
Have borne away their mother dead—
So stand the nations thine no more.

From room to room those children roam,
Heart-stricken by the unwonted black :
Their house no longer seems their home :
They search ; yet know not what they lack.

Years pass : self-will and passion strike
Their roots more deeply day by day ;
Old kinsmen sigh ; and 'how unlike,'
Is all the tender neighbours say.

And yet at moments, like a dream,
A mother's image o'er them flits :
Like hers, their eyes a moment beam ;
The voice grows soft, the brow unknits.

Such, Mary, are the realms once thine
That know no more thy golden reign :
Hold forth from heaven thy Babe Divine ;
Oh, make thine orphans thine again.

IV. RESPEXIT HUMILITATEM.

Not all thy purity, although
The whitest moon that ever lit
The peaks of Lebanonian snow
Shone dusk and dim compared with it—

Not that great love of thine, whose beams
Transcended, in their virtuous heat,
Those suns which melt the ice-bound streams,
And make earth's pulses newly beat—

It was not these that from the sky
Drew down to thee the Eternal Word:
He looked on thy humility;
He knew thee, 'Hand-maid of thy Lord.'

Let no one claim with thee a part;
Let no one, Mary, name thy name,
While, aping God, upon his heart
Pride sits, a demon robed in flame.

Proud vices, die. Where sin has place
Be sin's avenger, self-disgust:
Proud virtues, doubly die, that grace
At last may burgeon from your dust.

V. IN CIVITATE SANCTIFICATA REQUIEVI.

In silence, like a ridge of snows
Slow reared in lands for ever calm,
On Sion's brow the Temple rose;
In stillness grew as grows the palm.

Far off, on ridges vapour-draped,
Was hewn and carved each destined stone:
Far off, the axe the cedars shaped
Upon their native Lebanon.

So rose that Temple, holier far,
Incarnate Godhead's sacred Shrine:
Round her there swelled no din of war;
The peace that girt her was divine.

The deep foundations of that Fane
Were laid, ere lived the hills and seas,
In many a dread, unquarried vein
Of God's wide Will and fixed Decrees.

High Queen of Peace : her God possessed,
Her heart could feel no earthly want :
His kingdom, 'stablished in her breast,
Triumphant was, not militant :

And day by day more amply played
His love about its raptured thrall,
Like some eternal sunset stayed
On cliff rich-veined, or mountain wall.

VI. THE RAINBOW.

All-glorious shape that fleet'st wind-swept
Athwart the empurpled pine-girt steep,
That sinless from thy birth hast wept,
All-gladdening, till thy death must weep ;

That in eterne ablution still
Thine innocence in shame dost shroud,
And washed where stain was none, dost fill
With light thy penitential cloud ;

Illume with peace our glooming glen,
O'er-arch with hope yon distant sea,
To angels whispering and to men,
Of her whose lowlier sanctity

In God's all-cleansing freshness shrined
Renounced all pureness of her own,
And aye her lucent brow inclined,
God's 'Hand-maid' meek, before his throne.

VII. ANCILLA DOMINI.

THE Crown of creatures, first in place,
Was of all creatures creature most :
By nature nothing—all by grace ;
Redemption's first and loftiest boast.

Hand-maid of God in heart and will,
Without his life she seemed a death ;
A void that he alone could fill,
A word suspended on his breath.

Yet—void and nothing—she in him
The creature's sole perfection found :
She was the great Rock's Shadow dim ;
She was the Silence, not the sound.

On golden airs—by him upheld—
She knelt, a soft Subjection mute,
A hushed Dependance, tranced and spelled,
Still yearning towards the Absolute.

She was a Sea-shell from the deep
Of God ; her function this alone,
Of him to whisper as in sleep,
In everlasting undertone.

This hour on him her eyes are set :
And those who tread the earth she trod
Like her, themselves in her forget,
And her remember but in God.

VIII. REGINA ANGELORUM.

ERE yet mankind was made ; ere yet
The sun, and she that rules the night,
Were in their heavenly stations set,
God's Sons were playing in his sight.

Age after age those armies vast
In winding line had upward flown,
Yet ne'er their shadows higher cast
Than on the first step of the Throne.

And downward through the unsounded space,
If those had sunk who soared above,
They ne'er had found the buried base
Of Godhead's condescending Love—

Then he, the God who made them, proved :
For high and higher as they soared,
Hymning the Eternal Son beloved,
The God from God, and Lord from Lord,

He showed them, in that Form decreed,
Their God made Man—man's hope and trust—
'The Woman,' and 'The Woman's Seed,'
He showed ; the Unbounded bound in dust.

As when from some world-conquering height
The shepherd sees, ere risen the sun,
His advent clothe the cloud with light,
Before them thus that vision shone :

And while in wonder half, half fear,
That Child, that Mother fixed their eye,
He bade those heavenward hosts revere
Their God in his humility.

Set was that Infant as a sign :
In endless bliss confirmed were they
Who hailed that hour the Babe Divine ;
Self-sentenced those who turned away.

IX. SEDES SAPIENTIÆ.

'Wisdom hath built herself a House
And hewen her out her pillars seven.'
Her wine is mixed ; her guests are those
Who share the harvest-home of heaven.
The fruits upon her table piled
Are gathered from the Tree of Life :
Around are ranged the undefiled,
And those that conquered in the strife.
Who tends the guests? Who smiles away
Sad memories ; bids misgiving cease?
A crowned One countenanced like the day—
The Mother of the Prince of Peace.

Verse by Contemporary Writers

Lyrics

I. AVOWAL OF ST. BERNARDINE OF SIENA.

KENELM D. BEST, OF THE ORATORY.

FROM 'A MAY CHAPLET'; 'LES GUIRLANDES DE MAI,' OF F. PHILPIN DE RIVIÈRE, OF THE ORATORY, 1873.

'Her have I loved . . . and have desired to take her for my spouse, and I became a lover of . . . her beauty.' Wisdom viii. 2.

My heart is not mine any longer,
I confess it to you, dearest friends ;
I love, and no love could be stronger,
For my loved One the whole world transcends—
My heart is not mine any longer.

'Tis useless to dwell on her beauty,
She has utterly conquered my heart;
To praise her I feel is my duty,
But her fairness excels all my art—
'Tis useless to dwell on her beauty.

I cannot endure life without her,
Nor the length of the night and the day;
'Tis life to be thinking about her,
So I love her, and live in that way—
I cannot endure life without her.

I study, but study to find her;
To this end all my powers are trained;
My hope is, that she will be kinder;
My mind and my will are enchained—
I study, but study to find her.

For her then, my whole soul is yearning;
After God, she has won all my love;
'Tis a bright and pure flame ever burning,
'Tis a true vow recorded above—
For her then, my whole soul is yearning.

So now, need I name this Fair Maiden,
Need I say, it is Mary I mean?
My bosom at last is unladen—
Heaven's Queen was my heart's only queen:
So now, need I name this Fair Maiden?

II. TWO MAY-DAYS.

OSWALD HUNTER BLAIR, O.S.B.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1891.

TIME was, they say, when opening May
Was bright with signs of spring;
Full sweetly then, on woodland spray
The merry birds did sing:

The sun on high from cloudless sky
  Shone bravely down the while,
And sweetest flowers in leafy bowers
  Did lift their heads and smile.

To-day, alack, all bare and black
  Doth stand each naked bough :
No joys of spring their welcome bring
  To deck our May-day now :
A bitter breeze sighs through the trees—
  All leaden is the sky :
The flowers that peep from winter's sleep—
  They blossom but to die.

In days of old, ere faith was cold,
  Throughout this land of ours,
All men confessed God's Mother blest
  Queen of the Month of flowers :
All that was fair in earth, or air,
  Rejoiced to own her sway,
And brought their choicest gifts to greet
  The crownèd Queen of May.

Oh, who may wonder if the sun
  Behind the clouds do frown,
In very shame that Mary's name
  Has lost its old renown :
What marvel though the flowers that blow
  Be few and far between,
Since now, no more their scented store
  Is robbed to deck their Queen.

When to the Virgin-Mother mild—
  Forgotten all these years—
The erring child is reconciled
  By penance and by tears :

When faith imparts to English hearts
The grace to know her worth,
And Mary's love is prized above
The fleeting joys of earth :

Our May-day then, shall once again
Be glad with sights of spring ;
Earth, sun and sky shall glorify
The Mother of their King ;
Bright flowers shall bloom at Mary's feet,
Birds sing the livelong day ;
All nature meet in homage sweet
To her, the Queen of May.

III. ADVENT MEDITATION.

ALICE MEYNELL.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1891 ; AND 'POEMS,' 1893.

No sudden thing of glory and fear
Was the Lord's coming ; but the dear
Slow nature's days followed each other
To form the Saviour from his Mother—
One of the children of the year.

The earth, the rain received the trust—
The sun and dews, to frame the Just ;
He drew his daily life from these,
According to his own decrees,
Who makes man from the fertile dust.

Sweet summer and the winter wild,
These brought him forth, the Undefiled
The happy springs renewed again
His daily bread, the growing grain,
The food and raiment of the Child.

IV. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

LADY CATHERINE PETRE: 1831–1882.

FROM 'HYMNS AND VERSES,' 1883.

GUIDE thou my pen, O Mother, best and dearest;
For how can sinner write on theme so high?
Inspire my heart with visions brightest, clearest,
For nothing will be hard if thou art nigh.

Speak to my soul, and tell the wondrous story,
How God for ever marked thee as his Own—
Fair Vessel that should hold such floods of glory,
Yea, hold himself, the great Eternal One.

And pure he destined thee, and pure preserved thee,
In soul and body bright, immaculate;
From the dread curse original reserved thee,
One Pearl amid a world so desolate.

Bravely, O Mother, has thy heart responded;
Well hast thou treasured every loving grace;
Never, for one brief hour, hast thou desponded,
Or shrunk from the stern duties of thy place.

From first to last, in holy trust believing
Things that were far beyond all human lore;
From first to last, yet higher gifts receiving,
And offering up to God the fruit they bore.

Thy heart is one vast field for meditation:
Mother, I write no more—I can but pray;
And raise my heart in grateful adoration
To him who worketh in a wondrous way:

Mother, look down in holiest compassion
On those who will not see how dear thou art:
Drive far from them the clouds of pride and passion,
And join us all within thy loving heart.

V. REGINA ANGELORUM.

E. G. SWAINSON.

FROM 'THE IRISH MONTHLY,' 1880.

WHENE'ER I doubt if one so base as I
Shall share with heavenly choirs their joys serene,
This thought brings sweetest solace to my soul,
That thou, my Lady, art the Angels' Queen.

No seraph-form, to human weakness strange,
The regal sceptre holds in that high place;
But at the right hand of the King of kings
Thou sittest throned, a Daughter of our race.

Mother of God, creation's star-crowned Queen,
Heaven's mightiest spirits worship at thy feet;
Yet mid the splendour of thy pomp divine,
Our Mother and our Sister still we greet.

Shall I, then, fear to face the glittering ranks
That guard from step profane heaven's dazzling scene?
Their flame-tipped swords shall lower at the cry:
'Angels of God, my Mother is your Queen.'

VI. THE PASSION OF MARY.

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

FROM 'MERRY ENGLAND,' 1890.

O LADY MARY, thy bright crown
Is no mere crown of majesty;
For with the reflex of his own
Resplendent thorns Christ circled thee.

The red rose of this passion-tide
Doth take a deeper hue from thee,
In the five wounds of Jesus dyed,
And in thy bleeding thoughts, Mary.

The soldier struck a triple stroke
That smote thy Jesus on the tree ;
He broke the Heart of hearts, and broke
The Saint's and Mother's hearts, in thee.

Thy Son went up the angels' ways,
His passion ended ; but, ah me,
Thou found'st the road of further days
A longer way of Calvary.

On the hard cross of hope deferred,
Thou hung'st in loving agony,
Until the mortal-dreaded word
Which chills our mirth, spake mirth to thee.

The angel Death, from this cold tomb
Of life, did roll the stone away ;
And he thou barest in thy womb
Caught thee at last into the day—
Before the living throne of whom
The lights of heaven burning pray.

ENVOY.

O thou, who dwellest in the day,
Behold, I pace amidst the gloom :
Darkness is ever round my way
With little space for sunbeam-room.

Yet Christian sadness is divine,
Even as thy patient sadness was :
The salt tears in our life's dark wine
Fell in it from the saving cross.

Bitter the bread of our repast ;
Yet doth a sweet the bitter leaven :
Our sorrow is the shadow cast
Around it by the light of heaven.

O Light in light, shine down from heaven.

NOTE.

No. I. As a youth, St. Bernardine used to separate himself from his comrades in order to pray before a wayside picture of the Madonna. Hence their raillery, and the poetical playfulness with which he first parried and then satisfied their curiosity. (Translator.)

Sonnets

I. THREE SONNETS.

HELEN ATTERIDGE.

I. REGINA VIRGINUM.

THOU wert not of the foolish, who arose
To find their flower-decked lamps the light had spent,
When in the dead of night the air was rent
With 'Hark; the Bridegroom comes.' Then woe of woes
Fell on the foolish virgins' brief repose.
In vain they lingered, for no oil was lent;
While five all radiant to the nuptials went,
And hastened happy guests the door to close.

O Queen of Virgins, with thy being shone
Thy deathless lamp—in sadder, later years,
By harsh winds fanned and nourished with thy tears.
The Bridegroom's doors stand wide. We hasten on
To his great marriage-feast. Let thy pure ray
Down time's long vista shine, and light our way.

II. VIRGO FIDELIS.

'TIS midnight; and the minstrelsy of air
Earth breathes in echoes to the starry skies;
And o'er the stable-roof, to shepherds' eyes
A beam of glory tells that he is there.

Within, the Mother kneels, her birth-night prayer
Unto the Child Divine all glowing flies—
He listens ; yet an Infant, passive lies.
A lapse of years. The torches' ruddy glare
With saddest twilight mingles, to illume
The night fast gathering, where low they lay
In the cold silence of the rock-hewn tomb
A sacred Burden, till the Easter day.
And she, whose glance of rapture first was cast
On that still Brow, there weeping lingers last.

III. CAUSA NOSTRÆ LÆTITIÆ.

Glory to God ; we glory in his praise :
The anthem of our hearts to music swells,
And incense wreaths, and ringing of sweet bells
Call heavenward the weary thought that strays.
Glory to Christ our King : when close the days,
He rises o'er us 'neath his mystic veil ;
And lo, all lesser joys drop down and pale
In happy worship of his loving ways.
Look up, beyond : O Mother-Queen, we see
Thy pleading hands that our lost peace restored—
Thine outstretched hands whence gifts flow endlessly.
Look through the ages back : for at thy word,
The Joy of all the nations came through thee
To cross and throne—sweet Handmaid of the Lord.

II. THE GROTTO OF LOURDES.

J. J. AUBERTIN.

FROM 'SEVENTY SONNETS OF CAMOENS,' ETC., 1878.

All who profess to bow before a throne
Whereof, ye must avow, man nothing knows,
Blame not as blind this worship here, but own
From a full-blown sacred sentiment it flows ;

If reason's half 'gainst reasoning minds ye close,
And praise, half prostrate only, an Unknown,
The crowd, that all its trusting headlong throws
In blind devotion, is far stauncher shown.
Nor fondly deem that ye shall not be blamed,
Who, damning reason half, yet wield her knife
To prune where reason shrinks, as half ashamed,
Bleeding away for her faith's very life.
Bastard believers, blush before this sight ;
Wear faith's whole fetters, or renounce her quite.

III. MONTH OF MAY.

J. GERARD, S.J.

FROM 'THE IRISH MONTHLY,' 1880.

AGAIN the rude November's felon-hand
  Shall lacerate the vesture costly, gay,
That now, o'er field and forest through the land,
  Is woven in the magic loom of May.
Again through naked boughs, shall pipe the blast ;
  Again on flowerless meads, the frosts shall lie ;
Again as in the seasons that are past,
  The wealth it brought shall with the season die.
But not the flowers thou, in immortal soil
  Of human hearts, dost wake shall fade away ;
Nor winds shall ravage, nor shall frosts despoil
  The blossom thou dost tend, O Queen of May ;
Yea, by thine aid, this month of thine shall be,
For us the seedland of eternity.

IV. THE FIRST CHRISTMAS-EVE.

E. H. HICKEY.

FROM 'MICHAEL VILLIERS, IDEALIST, ETC.' 1891.

I

THERE was no room within the inn for them.
The Woman who, beneath her girdle, bare
Sweet Comfort for the world, a stranger there,
Lay all that solemn night in Bethlehem
Within a manger; Jesse's Root and Stem
Should spring the very morrow, strong and fair
And all the slumbering world was unaware.
We, who still slumber, how shall we condemn?

She lies, alone with God, this holy eve;
She, whose glad eyes will look to-morrow morn
With rapture on the blessed Man-Child born;
She, who in three-and-thirty years will grieve,
Pierced to the heart; she, who will yet receive
The garland of the Rose without a thorn.

II

OH, was there never a woman there to say,
'Behold, this Woman is nigh her travailing,'
And take her by the hand, and gently bring
Into a room, and softly speak, and lay
The Woman down, and watch by her till day?
Until the shadows fled, and light should spring,
And with the springing light the Holy Thing?
We, blind and cold, nor dare to blame, nor may.

And yet, if men had felt the throbbing breast
Of night alive with wonder, and the fair
Great dawn, they had left their beds all empty there,
Nor cared a whit for any sleep or rest.
We, have not we rejected any guest—
Dismissed the more than angel unaware?

Our Blessed Ladie's Lullaby

RICHARD VERSTEGAN:

XVI.–XVII. CENTS.

CONTRIBUTED BY JOSEPH GILLOW.

FROM 'ODES,' 1601.

Upon my lap my Soveraigne sits,
And sucks upon my brest;
Meanewhyle, his love sustaines my lyf,
And gives my body rest.
Sing lullaby, my litle Boy;
Sing lullaby, my livès Joy.

When thow hast taken thy repast,
Repose (my Babe) on mee;
So may thy Moother and thy Nurs
Thy Cradle also bee.
Sing lullaby.

I grieve that duty doth not woork
All what my wishing would;
Because I would not bee to thee
But in the best I should.
Sing lullaby.

Yet as I am and as I may,
I must and wil be thyne;
Though all to litle for thyself,
Voutsafing to be myne.
Sing lullaby.

My wits, my woords, my deeds, my thoughts,
And els what is in mee,
I rather wil not wish to use,
If not in serving thee.
Sing lullaby.

My Babe, my Blis, my Chyld, my Choyce,
My Frute, my Flower, and Bud,
My Jesus, and my only Joy,
The Somme of all my good.
Sing lullaby.
My Sweetnesse, and the Sweetest moste
That heaven could earth deliver,
Soule of my love, Spirit of my lyf,
Abyde with mee for ever.
Sing lullaby.
Live stil with mee, and bee my Love,
And death wil me refraine,
Unlesse thow let mee dy with thee,
To live with thee againe.
Sing lullaby.
Leave now to waile thow lucklesse wight,
That wrought'st thy race's woe,
Redresse is found, and foilèd is
Thy frute-aluring foe.
Sing lullaby.
Thy frute of death from Paradise
Made thee exylèd mourne ;
My Frute of Lyf to Paradise
Makes joyful thy returne.
Sing lullaby.
Grow up good Frute, bee nowrisht by
These fountaines two of mee,
That only flow with maiden's-milk,
The only meat for thee.
Sing lullaby.
The earth is now a heaven become,
And this base bower of myne
A princely pallas unto mee,
My Sonne doth make to shyne.
Sing lullaby.

His sight gives cleerenesse to my sight
When waking I him see ;
And sleeping, his myld countenance
Gives favour unto mee.
Sing lullaby.
When I him in myne armes embrace
I feel my harte imbraced,
Ev'n by the inward grace of his,
Which hee in mee hath placed.
Sing lullaby.
And when I kis his loving lips,
Then his sweet smelling breath
Doth yeild a favor to my soule,
That feedes love, hope and faith.
Sing lullaby.
The shepheards left their keeping sheep,
For joy to see my Lambe ;
How may I more rejoyce to see
Myself to bee the Dam.
Sing lullaby.
Three kinges their treasures hether brought,
Of incense, myrh and gold,
The heaven's Treasure and the King
That here they might behold.
Sing lullaby.
One sorte an angel did direct ;
A star did guyde the other ;
And all the fairest Sonne to see
That ever had a mother.
Sing lullaby.
This sight I see, this Chyld I have,
This Infant I embrace,
O endlesse Comfort of the earth,
And heaven's eternal Grace.
Sing lullaby.

Thee sanctitie herself doth serve ;
  Thee goodnesse doth attend ;
Thee blessednesse doth wait upon,
  And vertues all comend.
    Sing lullaby.
Great kinges and prophets wishèd have,
  To see that I possesse ;
Yet wish I never thee to see,
  If not in thankfulnesse.
    Sing lullaby.
Let heaven and earth and saintes and men
  Assistance give to mee,
That all their moste occurring ayd
  Augment my thankes to thee.
    Sing lullaby.
And let th' ensuing blessed race
  Thow wilt succeeding raise,
Joyne all their praises unto myne
  To multiply thy praise.
    Sing lullaby.
And take my service wel in woorth,
  And Joseph's heere with mee,
Who of my Husband beares the name,
  Thy servant for to bee.
    Sing lullaby, my litle Boy ;
    Sing lullaby, my livès Joy.

NOTE.

Richard Verstegan, though little known at the present day, belonged to that galaxy of minor poets of the Elizabethan age which helped to make the English language what it is. He was an antiquarian also, a Catholic printer and publisher (*e.g.* of the edition of the 'Primer,' in English and Latin, the hymns of which he rendered afresh, in 1604), and a confessor for the faith. He was a personal friend of most of the poets of his day, specially of Barnfield, Greneway, Radcliff, Stanihurst, Shelton, Southwell, C. Tichborne, Vallenger, and White—his fellow-sufferers for religion. His dates are uncertain, and his works are rare, only three copies of the 'Odes' being known to exist. The Lullaby is printed in the spelling of the original. (Mainly from Mr. Gillow.)

Vision and Prayer

FREDERIC WILLIAM FABER: OF THE ORATORY, D.D.: 1814–1863.

FROM 'SIR LANCELOT: A LEGEND OF THE MIDDLE AGES,' BOOKS IV. AND IX., 1857.

I. YOUNG LANCELOT'S VISION IN THE VALLEY OF THE DRAVE.

His eye, so seemed it in his slumber, strove
To pierce the gloomy pinewood, where it stretched,
In misty length, a single sombre nave;
While, one behind another ranged, the rings
Of fireflies swung in circles of green light,
Like rocking lamps suspended from a roof.
There, suddenly among the boughs, the wind
Breathed a last sigh, and with it swept away
Those living stars, and all was silence round,
The silentness of an expecting dream.
Then, at the close of that cathedral nave,
A white and radiant vapour softly grew,
Dazzling and formless, which, with silvery gleam,
Lay like a tremulous pavement round the stems.
Far off, resplendent as an altar-piece
Illumined from behind, a Figure rose
Of beauty such as art hath ne'er conceived,
The Virgin-Mother with her Infant Son.
Upon her countenance, rounded like the moon,
An orb of open features, was impressed
The secret of her fortunes, which transcend
The loftiest surmise of created mind.
The sweet maternal instinct there divulged
In deep impassioned silence, to whose depth

Each lineament the while serenely lends
An utterance almost vocal, then appeared
Calmed and arrested by profounder thoughts,
And by the intense tranquillity of bliss
Brooding in chaste enjoyment on itself.
And yet, not wholly wanting was the look
Of pensive self-collection that dispersed,
On the celestial seeming of her face,
A beautiful timidity, through which
Her mortal birth o'er every feature reigned
Triumphant, and harmoniously o'erruled
The ineffable aspect which her heavenly lot
Upon her face transferred, where ecstasy,
Divinely glowing, by remembrances
Of grief, was deeply moved, yet not displaced—

* * *

Smitten with love, where there was nought to check
The bold adventure, no monition given
Which might retard its unchastised approach,
Sir Lancelot gazed in rapture on the Child.
Worship of love he proffered, without fear,
And felt no fear, all seemed so beautiful.
Straightway the vision stirred; the Mother hid
The Child, too long, too tenderly beheld;
And a dim trouble up the surface passed
Of that bright vaporous pavement spread around,
Like the black curls of wind that crisp the lake.

* * *

From out the vapour, with a tuneful noise,
Arose the Maiden-Mother, with her head
Star-crowned, her feet upon the subject globe,
The writhing serpent bruised beneath her heel,
Herself by grace assumed unto a throne
And neighbourhood unspeakable. Let verse

Seek not for craft of language to declare
The seeming of the Woman glorified,
The Mortal who was Mother of our God—
Him only, singly worshipped evermore,
Singly, with equal glory to the Three.
And underneath the globe was laid a tomb,
O'er which the twelve Apostles bending gazed,
Interpreting the marvel of the flowers,
The white and speckless lilies, that broke forth
And momently grew, budded, flowered and swung
Their waxen censers in the vacant tomb.
Guiding the eyes of nations and of times
Aloft, the Virgin pointed to her Son
In palpable Divinity enthroned,
Yet, lacking not one token of that birth
His Creature was elected to confer.

Enough : such visions were familiar then,
And to the spirit of that age akin,
Mingling the uncertain with the true, while yet
They ministered to real works of grace.
Enough, that Lancelot from that day forth,
In the true knightly fashion of the times,
Was a sworn serf of Mary, with a vow
Made inwardly, and worshipping full oft
With worship falling short and frustrated
By youthful inconsistencies, below
That high devotion which belongs of right
Unto the majesty of Mary, Queen
Of Heaven, and Empress of the Sacred Heart—
Yet, worship such as sanctified his life
And quietly detained him near to God ;
Such worship as infallibly secures
Its purity to youth, or, to old age,
The placid harbour of repentant love.

II. THE AGED LANCELOT'S HYMN AFTER HIS ABSOLUTION.

See, see, how evening's sloping shadows grow
Upon the massy nave, and all the stone
Is flecked with little clouds of colour, thrown
From the west window ; on the ground they go,
Silently creeping eastward, while the air
Thickens within the choir, and so conceals
The altar, whose benignant Presence there
The slowly rocking lamp alone reveals.
Ah me, how still. Our Lady's Vesper-song
Hath died away amid the choral throng ;
But, the pure-visaged moon, that climbs elate
The throne of day, now strikes with trembling light
The painted lattice, where the live-long night
Saint Mary chaunts her lone 'Magnificat.'

'Hail, Mary, hail : O Maiden-Mother, hail.
In thankfulness I lean upon the thought
Of thy mysterious chastities ; unsought
Comes the sweet faith thy prayers can never fail
In that high heaven where thou hast been assumed ;
And with this hope my spirit newly plumed
Strives upward, like a weary dove in sight
Of her lost refuge, steering by the light
Wherewith thy name hath silently illumed
The Church below, cheering the gradual night
The world hath forced upon the primal day
Of our sweet faith ; and I, on penance cast
Till patient yearning should retrieve the past,
May bless thee for the succour of thy ray.
The light is vocal, wavering on the glass :
The jewel midway in the braided hair,
The eyes, the lifted hand, are speaking there,
And o'er the lips the argent quiverings pass.

She sings ; she sings : but, thirsty silence drinks
The heavenly sound before its burden sinks
Into my listening ear. Hail, Mary, hail :
Hail, thou that art the Haven of the heart
Accessible in all our moods ; a Veil
Obscuring not, but gifted to impart
New aspects of the cross : though sin erase
That Sign from heaven, before our downcast eyes,
Which fall on thee, its sweet reflection lies
Like a soft shadow in a moon-lit place.
Hail, Mary, hail : O wondrous Mother, pray
To thy dear Son, who takes our sins away.'

From 'Andiatorocte and other Poems'

ALBANY, NEW YORK, 1888.

CLARENCE A. WALWORTH,

RECTOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ALBANY.

Lake George, called by the aborigines Andiatoroctè, or Tail of the Lake, was known to the early missionaries as Lake Sacrament, from the fact that Father Isaac Jogues baptized many savages in its waters. (Author.)

I. IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Fair as the moon by night,
And brighter than the noon-day sun,
Sweet Mary stands alone
In a flood of light.
From her creation,
From life's first, earliest vibration,
From that first feeble palpitation

Of a new life unseen, unknown,
Except by God alone,
She bore no mark of the primal curse.
No taint from any source,
No stain of sin
Wrought by herself, nor inbred and original,
Marred that sweet body, fair and virginal,
Or the pure soul within.
In this beauty of her state
She stands, the glory of her race,
Pure, holy, innocent, immaculate
And 'Full of grace';
In every quality of soul
A matchless, perfect whole;
In every line and feature
A faultless, though a finite creature.
In truth, 'tis easy to believe
In this exemption of Christ's holy Mother
From the birth-sin engendered by the other,
The first and guilty Eve.
It was a gift that could be given
As readily as when, at the font,
The water falls on the infant's front,
And the pardon falls from heaven.
It was a simple, unconditioned fact,
With only one party to the act.
All powerful was God to render;
Helpless, sweet Mary's soul to hinder.
Hail, Mary; from thy orient
As spotless as the snow:
And hail, the grace which did prevent
And made thee so.

There is, according to my thought,
A harder problem here, which brings

My uttermost imaginings
To naught.
When I recall that saintly life
Of Mary, Mother, Daughter, Wife ;
And when I try to trace
Its golden thread,
As if the perfect web lay spread
Before my face ;
When above all,
I set me to recall
Her life-long perseverance
In spotless innocence and moral beauty,
By the working of her own sweet will,
Her close adherence
To God's dear love and prayer and daily duty,
Through doubt and sorrow faithful still,
Perfect in all ;
When I recall
The matchless merit
Of that sweet spirit,
Aided, indeed, by grace—but always free—
Oh then, 'tis hard for me,
All sick with error,
To master my surprise ;
To lift mine eyes
From the dark mirror,
Where my own life reflected lies,
Up to that radiant zodiac
Where, like the moon in silver light
Around the darkened globe,
She moved through life in her own sweet track,
In her own white robe,
Queen of the night.

O Mary, Full of grace,
Help me, for I am weak,
To follow in thy trace.
Thy prayers, dear Mother, I bespeak.
If thou wilt plead for this,
I cannot miss
To find, some day, the home I seek.

II. GLIMPSES OF CONVENT LIFE.

HARK, from the sky a call, earnest and deep ;
Softly the silent lake reflects the sound ;
Sweetly it sinks into the woods around ;
Then drops, like faithful duty done, to sleep.
Fell ever on the ear such silvery spray?
How quick to flood the air ; how quick to die away.
'Tis but the 'Angelus'—the signal of a bell.
Aye, true ; but who are signalled thus, and why?
Know ye what makes yon iron throat to swell?
Listen, and I will tell.
Earth interlocking once with the deep sky,
Eternity was born Child to the hour ;
Men saw the cradle of Infinity.
Such, is the burden of that loud outcry
Which leaps into the air from yonder tower.
At sunrise, noon, and sunset going forth
O'er mountain chain and sea, circling the earth,
Leaping from spire to spire, the 'Angelus' is heard.
Meek worshippers, low bending at the word,
With reverent knee, and with glad unison
Of heart and lip, repeat the angel's benison.
A Gabriel in the belfry gives the key,
Three silver peals repeated, three times three.

Arrested by the summons, loving millions pray.
These are the words that all in secret say :
'God's Angel came, with word and sign,
To Mary, of a Child Divine.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace ; and hail,
The Fruit of thy blest womb :
God's Mother, pray for us this day,
And when our death shall come.

'Lo me, the Handmaid of the Lord ;
Be it according to thy word.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace ; and hail,
The Fruit of thy blest womb :
God's Mother, pray for us this day,
And when our death shall come.

'The Word Divine did flesh assume,
And made this woeful world his home.
Hail, Mary, Full of grace ; and hail,
The Fruit of thy blest womb :
God's Mother, pray for us this day,
And when our death shall come.'

The chime that seemed to idlers on the shore
A fairy note descending from the skies,
To please the sentimental ear, far otherwise
Fell in the circle where, at the same hour,
Low bent the brethren at Mary's shrine. All rose :
To them its clangour was the sign to close
Their silent meditation with the Angel's Prayer.

III SCENES AT THE HOLY HOME.

How the Child Jesus learned to talk ; and how he taught Saint Joseph to be silent.

One evening the Holy Family
Were gathered in the Egyptian land,
At Cairo, a poor and fugitive band,

Yet richly blest in their poverty—
Jesus and Mary and Joseph—these three.
Then Joseph the Boy to speech beguiled :
'Say Mary ; say Mary, dear Child.'
The Infant's voice was launched in the air ;
And the name was spoken so soft and clear,
Speech never sounded in mother's ear
So musical and fair.
'Say Father, now,' then Joseph prayed :
And 'Abba, Abba, Abba,' he said.
The title sprang from that velvety tongue,
So sweet and full of cheer,
The choirs of paradise checked their song,
And leaned on their harps to hear.
The voice was distant ; yet not a throat
In all their throng could sound a note,
To make the distant seem so near.

Then a silence dropped on the Patriarch's soul ;
It lasted long,
Like the silence that follows a sweet song
Which has filled the spirit full,
And every sense beguiled.
The Boy-God looked up at his Mother and smiled,
And whispered : 'This silence will not end ;
'Tis my gift to a beloved Friend.'

Now the life of Joseph has been recorded,
And justice full to his love awarded ;
Yet not one word from his mouth is penned.
The sacred record shows thus always,
To reader, or hearer,
That silent duty is counted dearer
Than the loud tongue of praise.

Hymn of Victory

RICHARD D'ALTON WILLIAMS:
1825–1862.

FROM 'THE LAMP,' 1857, AND 'THE POEMS OF SHAMROCK,' 1883.

TO OUR LADIE OF VICTORY: A CENTO.

Hail, holy Queen, all hail, Ladie,
Life, sweetness, hope and love;
To thee we raise our ceaseless wail,
Mourning and weeping, faint and pale,
Eve's children, in this tearful vale
We cry to thee above, Marie,
We cry to thee above.

Sweet Queen of Mercy, deign, Ladie,
To turn thine eyes below:
And when we've o'er life's treacherous main,
Poor exiles, sailed in grief and pain,
Thy womb's blest Fruit, our Jesus slain
To us in glory show, Marie,
To us in glory show.

War is our lot below, Ladie,
Whether that war we wage
With sickness, poverty, dearth, or woe,
The passions within that surge and glow
With human tyrant, or fiendish foe—
'Tis the same from age to age, Marie,
The same from age to age.

Peace is an idle dream, Ladie,
'Tis deadly strife around :
Bitter and red is time's turbid stream,
Round us the phantoms of cloudland scream,
And rarely the swords of the angels gleam
Till the soul is bound, or crowned, Marie,
Till God is lost, or found.

But we call thee not in vain, Ladie,
To the mortal strife of souls,
To walk through this fiery battle-plain,
To teach the weakest to fight amain,
Saying, 'Who slays not shall be surely slain,'
And the combat onward rolls, Marie,
The combat onward rolls.

While this earthly vesture mars, Ladie,
The ascent to our native sphere,
And the yearning soul, through her dungeon bars,
Gazes aloft on her home of stars,
And the discord of life's unceasing wars
Grates on her tender ear, Marie,
Grates on her tender ear.

Oh, turn thy gracious eyes, Ladie,
When grace seems all withdrawn,
And the heart, like a tomb where the dead Christ lies,
Shall be angel-thronged, and the soul shall rise
An immortal god through the joyful skies,
In a resurrection dawn, Marie,
In a resurrection dawn.

At thy feet proud heads incline, Ladie,
In contrition's joy of woe :
Than the Holy of Holies, a holier shrine
The Heart of Jesus has found in thine,

Whence his mercies beam and his glories shine,
And the tears of repentance flow, Marie,
And the tears of repentance flow.

From broken faith and truth, Ladie,
Protect our souls alway ;
From the crimes of age and the snares of youth,
From slander's poisonous serpent-tooth,
And the pitiless Pharisee's scorn of ruth,
Defend our lives, we pray, Marie.
Defend our lives, we pray.

Hark, that triumphal hymn, Ladie,
'Behold thy Queen, my soul' :
Her chariot wheels, like those of him
Whose Throne is rapt by cherubim,
Adown the dawn like music swim
And sparkle while they roll, Marie,
And lighten while they roll.

Victorious o'er and o'er, Ladie,
In heaven is hymned thy praise
To golden lyres, on the starry floor,
Where the white-robed lords of light adore
Thy Son, who gave his lustral gore
Our fallen thrones to raise, Marie,
A fallen foe to raise.

On earth for evermore, Ladie,
Shall man resume the strain ;
All nations bow thy shrine before,
And the organ-clang of the ocean's roar
Implore thee more from shore to shore,
Star of the restless Main, Marie,
Star of life's lonely Main.

NOTE.

Stanza 9, Line 5 : The Pharisee's scorn of ruth ; 'La fausse piété est toujours cruelle.' (Massillon.)

Rondeaux and Sonnet

RICHARD WILTON, M.A.

FROM 'SUN-GLEAMS,' 'BENEDICITE,' AND 'WOOD NOTES,'
1873–1889.

I. CHRISTMAS DAY.

In vesture white, the Eternal Child
Lay on his Mother's lap and smiled :
  What joy to see that longed-for sight—
  Her spotless Lily of delight,
Her Love, her Dove, her Undefiled.

She recked not of the anguish wild,
The sorrow upon sorrow piled,
  His dead Form swathed one awful night
    In vesture white.

Oh, let our hearts, this birthday bright,
The sorrow and the joy unite ;
  While, by the twofold grace beguiled
  Of suffering Man and Infant mild,
We walk with him on Faith's calm height
    In vesture white.

II. JESUS IN MARY'S ARMS.

Whiter than snow, her Infant lay
In Mary's arms that happy day ;
  Fairer than all the flowers that blow,
  Brighter than all the stars that glow,
Sky blossoms in the milky way.

Thus I present him, when I pray,
As in the arms of faith, and say :
  'Father, there was one Life below
    Whiter than snow.'

That whiteness pleads my cause, I know,
And wins for me the grace to show
Some reflex rays while here I stray—
Pledge I shall wear the pure array
In which the heavenly armies go
Whiter than snow.

III. THE CREATOR ON MARY'S LAP.

By him, for him were all things made,
Who once on Mary's lap was laid :
The mighty orbs that sweep through space,
Far as the keenest eye can trace,
By his controlling hand are swayed.

The lilies in a leafy shade
That bloom their little hour and fade,
Are crowned with sweetness and with grace
By him, for him.

He who in human garb arrayed,
Once toiled on earth and wept and prayed,
Gave to each shining star its place,
Bade every blossom lift its face—
Their differing glories all displayed
By him, for him.

IV. THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

In Holman Hunt's picture, Mary starts at the Shadow of the Cross thrown on the wall from the Figure of Jesus.

That Shadow dear upon the wall,
Where level rays of evening fall,
And bid us view the Lord uprear
His tired arms in the sunset clear—
Let it console us, not appal.

That Shadow has a voice for all
Whom other shadows may enthral ;
It soothes away our mortal fear,
That Shadow dear.

Invite its presence, hear its call,
Dwellers in cottage, or in hall :
Rest not until the sign appear,
Then sit beneath it all the year ;
It whispers peace, whate'er befal—
That Shadow dear.

V. CANA IN GALILEE.

Behold, in Flower of Manhood, the True Vine
To full perfection grown from a dry ground ;
Grace in his eyes and lips, he looks around
Where bride and bridegroom at the feast recline :
He hears the whisper : 'Son, they have no wine'—
When lo, as if ripe clusters had been found
And sudden crushed, the purple streams abound
To prove the Branch that yielded them divine.
Oh, happy thought for bridegroom and for bride
In after ages, 'mid their innocent mirth,
That by his presence Jesus beautified
A marriage-feast, blessing all homes of earth,
Upon whose walls the fruitful vines are seen
With hopeful clusters smiling through the green.

Wordsworth's Sonnet, and other Poetry

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: 1770–1850.

I. THE VIRGIN.

FROM 'ECCLESIASTICAL SONNETS,' 1821.

MOTHER, whose virgin bosom was uncrost
With the least shade of thought to sin allied;
Woman, above all women glorified,
Our tainted nature's solitary boast;
Purer than foam on central ocean tost;
Brighter than eastern skies at daybreak strewn
With fancied roses, than the unblemished moon
Before her wane begins on heaven's blue coast;
Thy image falls to earth.
Yet some, I ween,
Not unforgiven the suppliant knee might bend
As to a visible power, in which did blend
All that was mixed and reconciled in thee
Of mother's love with maiden purity,
Of high with low, celestial with terrene.

II. OUR LADY OF THE SNOW: MOUNT RIGHI.

FROM 'MEMORIALS OF A TOUR, IN 1820, ON THE CONTINENT.'

MEEK Virgin-Mother, more benign
Than fairest star, upon the height
Of thy own mountain, set to keep
Lone vigils through the hours of sleep,
What eye can look upon thy shrine
Untroubled at the sight?

These crowded offerings, as they hang
In sign of misery relieved,
Even these, without intent of theirs,
Report of comfortless despairs,
Of many a deep and cureless pang
And confidence deceived.

To thee in this aërial cleft
As to a common centre, tend
All sufferers that no more rely
On mortal succour—all who sigh
And pine, of human hope bereft,
Nor wish for earthly friend.

And hence, O Virgin-Mother mild,
Though plenteous flowers around thee blow,
Not only from the dreary strife
Of winter, but the storms of life,
Thee have thy votaries aptly styled,
'Our Lady of the Snow.'

Even for the man who stops not here,
But down the irriguous valley hies,
Thy very name, O Lady, flings
O'er blooming fields and gushing springs
A tender sense of shadowy fear,
And chastening sympathies.

Nor falls that intermingling shade
To summer-gladsomeness unkind:
It chastens only to requite
With gleams of fresher, purer light;
While o'er the flower-enamelled glade
More sweetly breathes the wind.

But on—a tempting downward way,
A verdant path before us lies ;
Clear shines the glorious sun above ;
Then give free course to joy and love,
Deeming the evil of the day
Sufficient for the wise.

III. NUN'S WELL, BRIGHAM.

POEM COMPOSED, OR SUGGESTED, DURING A TOUR IN 1833.

So named from the Religious House which stood close by . . . Attached to the church of Brigham was formerly a chantry, which held a moiety of the manor ; and in the decayed parsonage some vestiges of monastic architecture are still to be seen. (Author.)

The cattle crowding round this beverage clear
To slake their thirst, with reckless hoofs have trod
The encircling turf into a barren clod ;
Through which the waters creep, then disappear,
Born to be lost in Derwent flowing near ;
Yet o'er the brink, and round the lime-stone cell
Of the pure spring (they call it the 'Nun's Well,'
Name that first struck by chance my startled ear)
A tender spirit broods—the pensive shade
Of ritual honours to this fountain paid
By hooded votaresses with saintly cheer ;
Albeit, oft the Virgin-Mother mild
Looked down with pity upon eyes beguiled
Into the shedding of 'too soft a tear.'

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Appendix

CARMINA MARIANA

EXTRACTS FROM SOME REVIEWS

MAY—NOVEMBER, 1893

SPECTATOR.

'In the present volume Mr. Orby Shipley chooses a theme interwoven with the highest mystery, and the initial dogma of the Christian's creed. It is a theme, moreover, that can only be interpreted fitly by the eagles of song, the high priests of art, or by simple and childlike souls who have claim to our sympathy with their faith, rather than with the expression of it. . . . We do not examine this volume as we should a literary monument. It has other and greater interest, as it expresses the sentiment of many centuries. It is important as a witness to the marvellous agreement, through vast periods full of change, in recognition of the Mother of Christ. Readers of Catholic prayer-books are sometimes startled by the varied epithets applied to her. This book is witness that, in none of them sanctioned in Catholic practice, is there novelty of respect. It seems certain that the Christian Church of East and West accepted, rather than imposed, the cult which the common reverence of Catholics spontaneously and logically offered. As we have said, much of the poetry in these lauds of Mary has the lisp of infantine utterance, and the simplicity of intuitive certainty proper to the unlearned. It was felt by souls eager to believe, that the Virgin of Nazareth is the guardian for all time of the doctrine of the Divine Incarnation. She is the visible sign of that union between the creature and the Creator which is the "desire of all nations," and the fountain of all mysticism of all nations. Seeing this with his half-inspired eyes, Dante has made St. Bernard—and Mr. Shipley has chosen a singularly good translator of St. Bernard's hymn in Father Russell, S.J.—the chief votary of Mary, and put on the Saint's lips the sublime invocation with which Dante's final vision of God is prefaced.'

MONTH.

'The compiler having proposed to himself the two-fold aim of raising a pious monument to the honour of Mary, and at the same time of attending to its artistic beauty, much judgment was required to secure at all times merit and edification. Yet, we are bound to acknowledge that whilst the latter is uniformly attained, the general level of merit is remarkably high. It was not to be expected that the tribute of love and praise paid by non-Catholic poets should be as bold, unfaltering and rich in volume as the strains of her Catholic clients; yet, it is both pleasing and edifying to observe how tenderly loving is the sentiment even of those whom we might least have expected to be in sympathy with Marian devotion. Amongst such writers, however, it may not be impertinent to remark that fulness of sympathy is invariably proportionate to appreciation of the great central Christian dogma of the Incarnation. The title "Mother of God" is at once the best vindication against heresy of the Divinity of her Son, and the main source of all inspiration, poetic and devout, in her honour. . . . We do not wish to underrate any testimonies to the sweet attraction of Mary's influence upon unbelieving, or misbelieving, or as yet imperfectly believing souls. It would have been a great pity if Mr. Orby Shipley had omitted them from his collection. We only want to accentuate the intimacy of the nexus between devotion to our Lady and belief in and devotion to Jesus Christ, as God Incarnate. . . . The reality of perception based on steadfast belief, appears in the beautiful hymn, "Virgini Deiparæ," extracted from Francis T. Palgrave's recent poem, "Amenophis"; and to no other source, we think, may be traced the fervour which, chastened in utterance, cannot be suppressed in the sonnets on the "Childhood of Immanuel," by Arthur M. Morgan. There are eight of them reproduced in this book. Our readers must have recourse to them there. But, the key to their depth is contained in the following lines (from the second of them)—

> Through thee are one the twain whom sin would sever;
> Through thee comes back the gift whence Eva fell.'

AVE MARIA: NOTRE DAME, U.S.A.

'In this noble volume is to be found by far the largest anthology of poems in Mary's praise that the world has yet seen. The remarkable thing is that it has not been done earlier—that it has been left to an English convert of the latter half of the nineteenth century to make us an exclusive

hymn-book of her who is the Mother and Queen of all mankind. . . . Crashaw's contributions are as burning as one would expect from the most ardent of all English poets. His symbol might be indeed a heart on fire. Fire and snow, ardour and purity, blended with a great simplicity, were in this burning bush amongst the forest trees of Elizabethan poetry. . . . Coventry Patmore's ode is full of a great and stately magnificence, which, in its grandeur of imagery, sets him in a line of succession to Crashaw, though the passion of his verse be less. Poetry like this belongs by royal right to the great age of Elizabethan poetry. He prays her aid in his song :

> . . . Grant me the steady heat
> Of thought, wise, splendid, sweet . . .

In such a thunderous ode as this, with its long roll and reverberation, Patmore is the "organ voice" of the nineteenth century in England. What diversity—that the man who could have written the exquisite and rounded subtleties of the "Angel in the House" could be also wielder of this tremendous measure. Some of the old poems translated from foreign tongues into English are also full of innocent beauty. Of these are the "Colloquy between Christ, Our Lady and the Angel" of Jacopone, translated by E. M. Clerke ; John Kenyon's Provençal "Ballad of the Gipsies" who tell the Infant Christ's fortune from his palm ; the Dialogue between the Child Christ and his Mother of Sarbiewski, translated by Richard Wilton, notably. But, there are many others. "Our Lady's Lullaby," of Richard Verstegan, a Catholic of Elizabethan days, the friend of Chideock Tichbourne and other martyrs for the faith, is very tender. . . . I cannot conclude better than with this very exquisite snatch of song to a dead astronomer, Father Perry, S.J., by one of the youngest of our English poets, Francis Thompson :

> Starry Amorist, starward gone,
> Thou art—what thou didst gaze upon.

Manchester Guardian.

'Whether the whole arrangement could with advantage have been a chronological sequence is a question on which we are unwilling to express a decided opinion, more especially as we could not pretend to have formed it on the basis of a careful consideration such as the subject has evidently received from Mr. Shipley. On the one hand, we are unable to shut our eyes to the various phases, inevitably affected by the contemporary history of the Church, through which the veneration of the Virgin has passed, from the days of the

Nestorian Controversy to those of the Vatican decrees. . . . On the other hand, the freer method of arrangement which Mr. Shipley has preferred, and which whilst loosely alphabetical has left it in his power to introduce many a concerted harmony, undoubtedly furnishes opportunities both more facile and more frequent for artistic enjoyment. And inasmuch as this anthology consists wholly of modern English verse, the historical method of arrangement could hardly have been adopted without becoming misleading in its own way. We are therefore, on the whole, well contented with the succession of "Beads, white, green and red" . . . which have been strung together for us by Mr. Shipley; and if by the side of such pearls as Henry Constable's Sonnets, or such genuinely modern, yet not less worthy, companions as Aubrey de Vere's "Mother of Orphans," a more or less dubious item may have here and there found acceptance, no serious damage has been done to the total effect. This effect is that of a very beautiful monument of art, consecrated to one of the most characteristic conceptions of the Church of Rome, which, though not peculiar to herself, has repeatedly revived with her revivals, and seems enduringly associated with her endurance.

CATHOLIC NEWS.

'It will be remarked with what sympathy non-Catholic writers are moved when touching on Our Lady; in some cases amounting to compassion. There is, perhaps, less of sympathy than of surprise in Shelley's lines from "Epipsychidion"—we are happy to have Mr. Shipley with those who hold them to be an invocation to Mary—but the former is very amply shown in Egerton-Warburton's Sonnet on the Marien Capelle, Carlsbad. . . . But, it is in Rossetti the highest appraisement of our Lady, by a non-Catholic, will be found; united to a fuller insight and suggestion whereby many of his poems about her bear a strange perception, a singular cognisance of the significance attaching to the Mother of God, of the imports crowding the Madonna's life. We know nothing by a non-Catholic, of finer feeling, of more subtle intention than his "Ave" . . . How sensitively the girlhood of Mary is touched in; with what delicacy he suggests the waiting years when she was widowed of her Son, closing with the prayer of faith, of love, of hope. How came Rossetti so close to the understanding of her? Was it because he drank so deeply of the Paradiso? If the book shows Rossetti as the high-water mark of non-Catholic thought of Our Lady, the Catholic appreciation is highest touched by Faber and De Vere. The quantitatively inadequate results

Faber left of his deep poetic gifts make precious almost every line that he wrote ; and the excerpts Mr. Shipley gives in no way assuage our sense of loss that he allowed those gifts to slumber, that other energies might be. With De Vere it is otherwise. Energy is in essence in his poetic thought ; no tinsel, no mere prettiness : the language sane and full ; the movement large and equal ; the thought spiritual and unhesitatingly direct. When he moves, there is no dragging of the robes about his feet : he is clear girt ; and in the spacious meade wherein he passes, the where he took is marked and unmistakeable. His lines on Murillo's picture bear the sense of amplitude in imagination and thought, which are his distinction. The faith of "Ancilla Domini" has no mist in it : from his Paradiso there are no "eloping angels," and there is no "happiness" in his hell.'

NEWCASTLE DAILY CHRONICLE.

'It is only on its purely literary side that we have to do with this volume ; and its purely literary merits are great enough to appeal to all English readers who have a genuine power of appreciating real poetry. Whatever may be said ; this must be admitted, that nothing in Christianity has brought such perfect and spontaneous expression into Christian art as the Catholic ideal of the Maiden-Mother of God, looking down with eyes of pity, womanly-divine, upon the earth, and raising tender intercession for the wretched and the lowly. And just as the artists of the middle-ages loved to brood over a vision no less full of graciousness and splendour than of solace and humanity, so religious poetry —so full in general of frigidities, slovenliness and conceits— has also found in the Catholic vision of the Madonna something so exalted, affecting and definite as to inspire real feeling and beautiful imagination. Whether owing or not to the magnetic influence which Italy exerts upon the highest type of human minds, most of our poets have felt and expressed at least an æsthetic sympathy, with this ideal of the old faith. Some of the noblest verse in this book—perhaps the noblest of all—is not by Catholic poets. . . . However, the bulk of the book is by Catholic writers, and the outcome for the most part of direct devotional impulse. . . . For the rest, "Carmina Mariana" is an anthology which includes so many beautiful things, and is of so unique a character, that it ought to find a place on many other than Catholic shelves. It is not only in the households of Mr. Shipley's co-religionists that an engraving after Raphael or Murillo may hang upon the wall.'

WEEKLY REGISTER.

'In this department—pieces marked, more or less, by a poetic quality—Mr. Orby Shipley's anthology proves English literature to be richer than most of us knew, or expected. Amongst the foremost things in any conceivable "Carmina Mariana," the literary Catholic looks for the two beautiful poems which we owe to one who was not a Catholic, though of Catholic descent—Rossetti. The "Ave" and the lovely sonnet on the "Girlhood of Mary Virgin" are certainly among the few things which one feels completely worthy of their high theme. Mr. Shipley has included the "Ave" . . . but the "Girlhood" finds no place among them. This we cannot but think a regrettable omission. . . Mr. Alfred Austin, who can at least write polished verses, has one specimen here—a touching ballad on a Breton legend, of an idiot whose one utterance was the evening hymn "Ave Maria." One morning he was found frozen in the snow, and carried to a house, only to die. Let the sequel be told in Mr. Austin's lines. . . Miss Katharine Tynan is represented by several poems touched with her characteristic wealth of colour. . . From the little-known poet, Robert S. Hawker, are quoted four poems. Three are unnotable; but the first is fine to a surprising degree. It is called "Aishah Shechinah." From another poet, of whom we confess we know but little—Dora Greenwell—comes a snatch of truest poetry, "The Blade of Grass". . . We must note the noble stanzas of Francis Thompson, and two other poems contributed to "Merry England," by Albert Fleming and Father Fitzpatrick, O.M.I. . . Here is a song of the time of Henry VI.—it is a veritable wild hill-flower—as monotonous as a cuckoo, and as fresh. But, the gem of all its kind, is the lovely sixteenth-century Carol. The hand of the moderniser, William J. Blew, has touched it; but touched it with a skill and reverence worthy of all praise. "This other night I saw a sight." What modern poet can write anything of such irresistible unconscious "naïveté" as this?'

TABLET.

'Mr. Orby Shipley describes the intention he had in view in the beautiful collection which fills this goodly volume. The sources from which he has culled the flowers of the Anthology are enumerated in his Preface. . . . To this we can only add, as our own appreciation of the work, that, both in design and execution, it is worthy of the highest praise; and that not the least of its excellencies is in the wide range of authors from which the poems have been

chosen. We cannot resist the temptation of quoting from a few. One we like very much is headed "A Sinner to the Blessed Virgin," a French poem of the fifteenth century, Translated by John O'Hagan: "Queen, by God supremely blest." . . . Of saddest interest is "The Wreck of Walsingham," contributed by Dom Hunter Blair, from the Rawlinson MSS. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The late R. S. Hawker's "Lady's Well," so exquisitely beautiful, yet well known to our readers, finds its place, as was fitting; and is followed by the "Song of the Sailors at Havre," by (his daughter) Morwenna Hawker. But we prefer to quote from Wordsworth, "The Nun's Well, Brigham." Our last extract must be "The Bells of St. Hugh's, Parkminster," from "Merry England," 1890 (by Frederick George Lee). . . . When we say that 350, or thereabout, poetical pieces inserted in this volume have been selected from nearly 200 different authors, it will give our readers some idea of the extent of the selection, though not of the judgment and taste that has guided the compiler, nor of the labour it has involved. We are writing these lines on the eve of the solemn re-consecration of England to the Mother of God and the Prince of the Apostles; and of the many beautiful literary tributes to Mary's honour, laid at her feet by her devout clients, there are few that equal in worth Mr. Orby Shipley's "Carmina Mariana."'

IRISH MONTHLY.

'This is the richest tribute that English literature has ever paid to the Queen of May, for it contains the best of all, and some of nearly all, that has been written about the Blessed Virgin in England, Ireland, and the United States. Even those who have a right to consider themselves fairly well acquainted with the subject will be surprised at the unknown treasures discovered by Mr. Shipley's diligence, from Richard Verstegan of Queen Elizabeth's time, to Richard Wilton of Queen Victoria's . . . The book opens auspiciously with an excellent translation by "A" from Adam of St. Victor, in the metre of the original. This, we think, appears here for the first time, and is worthy of such perfect translators as Wackerbarth and John O'Hagan. Few who read the translation by the latter, at page 241, will guess how literally he keeps to the old French original of the fifteenth century. One who reads Rossetti's exquisite "Ave," at page 334, will not wonder at his death-bed cry, reported even by the unsympathetic W. D. Scott, "Send me a priest; I want to be absolved from my sins." Among the Laureates of the Madonna to which the Anthology introduces us is the Rev.

Arthur Morgan, who describes the "Childhood" of Jesus in sonnets very devout in feeling, poetical in expression and skilful and accurate in construction. Another discovery is Clarence Walworth, an American convert priest. The first of three excellent samples given here resembles Mr. Coventry Patmore's "Unknown Eros" in form, and is almost equally elevated, though borne up by a less ethereal inspiration. But, we cannot linger any further over this rich, and —strange to say of a compilation—most original collection.'

DAILY CHRONICLE.

'"Our tainted nature's solitary boast," Wordsworth said of Our Lady; and this supreme position of the Madonna has been praised and glorified throughout Christendom in proportion as men have recognised the greatness of that human instrument through whom God became Man. So, at least, it appears to a Roman Catholic reviewer. If Catholics hold Mary great, it is because Christ, so unspeakably greater, was her Son. Here is the logical justification, put not controversially, but historically, of this devotion . . . In the earliest ages, East and West, in Saxon England, all over the Christian world, this devotion was expressed in language of rapture and enthusiasm. There is not a phrase used in modern Tridentine, or "Ultramontane," times by the most eloquent Jesuit or Redemptorist, which cannot be paralleled in the writings of the primitive Fathers, or of those of old England. England, indeed, as we have been lately reminded, was called "Our Lady's Dowry," so great was the devotion to her of the English . . . Catholicism knows well that human aspect of the "Mother and Child"; but, in the mingling of divinity with humanity lies the inexhaustible beauty of the theme. The "Holy Family," so venerated to-day in the Catholic Church, typifies the perfect social life of men as the general veneration of Saints reminds Catholics of the solidarity of mankind. "What a sanction," writes Mr. Pater of the Antonine age, "what a provocative to natural duty lay in that image of the new Madonna, just then rising upon the world like the dawn." Readers, then, who examine Mr. Orby Shipley's great Anthology of poems in praise of the Virgin Mother, whatever be their own beliefs and habits, need not be distressed, or shocked. They will see that as the primitive Christians of the Roman Catacombs honoured the Mother of God, so do the Catholic Christians of to-day; and that every fresh form and feature of that devotion does but bring out some old truth in a new and living light.'

BRADFORD OBSERVER.

'It has evidently been a labour of love on Mr. Shipley's part to cull the fairest flowers of poesy which bloom around the name of the Woman to whom the highest function of her sex has been ascribed. It matters little whether the reader shares the peculiar reverence with which the story of the Mother-Maid of the Godhead is enshrined in devout Catholic hearts. Whether this be so or not, every cultivated lover of pure, melodious, imaginative verse will cherish this exquisitely chosen collection of lyrics, odes, hymns and ballads which have been inspired by this most mystic of all legends. He includes Tennyson's "Mariana in the South" because the lovesick maiden found her strength in orisons night and morn to the Madonna; he makes an extract from George Eliot's "Agatha" because of the lovely refrain of Hans, the Tailor's, Song to the "Heart of Mary, mystic Rose"; and he includes Byron's matchless lines beginning

> Ave, Maria, o'er the earth and sea
> That heavenliest hour of heaven is worthiest of thee.

And so on, through the whole range of English poetry. . . . It needs a collection like this to make one realise how completely the story of the Virgin Mary has grown to be a part of the warp and woof of our imaginative life. The Irish chaplet of verse is, naturally, one of the brightest in the volume, for the Irish songs are, without exception, not only the outcome of a highly sensitive artistic sense, but of profound and true religious devotion.'

UNIVERSE.

'Cardinal Newman rarely gave expression to a more impressive sentiment when he declared, that "is the boast of the Catholic Religion that it has the gift of making the young heart chaste; and why is this, but that it gives us Jesus for our food, and Mary for our nursing Mother." These are striking words which every Catholic would do well to commit to memory. Mr. Orby Shipley, whose charming Anthology in honour of the Immaculate Mother of the God-Man lies before us, quotes these words of the great Oratorian Cardinal (in a Note to the Sonnet "The world shines bright for inexperienced eyes," from the pen of Father Matth. Russell, S.J.) . . . We rejoice to see that Irish poets are so numerously represented. This is as it should be. In no country in the world has the devotion to Mary Immaculate been so pronounced in the past, just as in the present, as in Ireland:

And in no country has that devotion produced more splendid results in true nobility of manhood and absolute purity of womanhood. . . . One of the sweetest poems in the book is a Breton legend by Alfred Austin, entitled "Ave, Maria." . . . There is a charming translation of the Latin verse of the present Holy Father. . . . We will make one more extract —a poem of two verses, entitled "Pilgrim's hymn," by that noble high-souled Protestant Irish patriot, Thomas Davis, "Fading, still fading, the last beam is shining."'

LIVERPOOL DAILY POST.

'It will be easily seen, that the remarks we are about to make are written by a Protestant, and Roman Catholic readers will doubtless understand the point of view. They are penned, however, with more sympathy and emotion than is general with Protestants in regarding the Marian cult. The late M. Renan, in one of his wisest sayings, pronounced that Humanity would be poorer if one of the elements that compose it were wanting. One or more of these elements is represented in the honour paid to the Blessed Virgin, and in the poetry which has been written in her praise. Some of this is modern in spirit and sentimental in key. Much of it is mediæval and quaint. Some of it is gravely, if not profoundly theological. Some of it is simple with an archaic and infantile simplicity. Some of it is subtle and full of those figures of very various merit which are called conceits. Some of it is purely spiritual; and some expatiates in distasteful physical detail. Mr. Orby Shipley has made his selection impartially, and without erecting a standard of taste, or even of theological propriety. The cult of Mary takes as many forms as the worship of God; and it is never for those who cannot sympathise, to dogmatically reject or condemn . . . Among the traditions incidentally treated may be cited—Father Prout's very pretty version of the "Zingarella," a story of the Holy Family in Egypt; a touch of unbelieving Thomas, after the death of Mary, given in the verse of Sir J. C. Barrow: Mrs. Browning's exquisite "Mary to the Child Jesus" . . . Matthew Bridges is drawn upon for a poem in which the Oriental idea of Mary as an Ivory Tower is prettily worked out: the origin of the expression "Gossamer-threads" is illustrated in some exquisite lines of Emily Bowles . . . And the feeling of simple Catholics could not be better given than in this earnest appeal from the pen of Matthew Russell, S. J., "Look down on us thy children, O Mother dear." From Mr. Lewis Morris comes an equally beautiful recognition

. . . and "Ave, Maria," is more decidedly infused with dogma, but still beautiful and winsome. It is by Rosa Mulholland.'

IRISH DAILY INDEPENDENT.

'A collection of poems about the Mother of God could scarcely fail to be a beautiful book, seeing that poets of all nations and all creeds, taking her for the highest standard of womanhood, have sung her praises. It is a little remarkable that in a time when anthologies and collections are so universal, it should be left so late in the day to make a gathering of Mary-songs. Her lilies are in many gardens, and her love in many hearts; and this is a book which will be dear as literature and doubly dear as love-songs. It has not been left to the Catholic Church to praise her. The most unlikely names meet one. Here are some at random —Byron, Shelley, Goethe, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, Schiller and Southey. Sometimes one cannot help thinking that the compiler of this very beautiful volume has strained a point, to bring certain authors within his scope —as where Tennyson is represented by his "Mariana in the South." Ordinarily, however, authors are here legitimately; Rossetti, of course, with "Ave," but also Longfellow, Moore, the Brownings, Dora Greenwell, Scott and Edgar Allan Poe . . . I will select here and there from Mr. Shipley's gleanings. Here, for example, is that "Lament for Walsingham" which is at once so simple and so piercing . . . Another lovely simplicity is the "Colloquy between Christ, our Lady and the Angel," from thirteenth-century Italian (translated by E. M. Clerke). "The Romaunt of Blessed Johann," by T. P. Bullivant, and the sixteenth-century Carol "This other night I saw a sight" are also lovely: but, here is a stave, most airy and delicate, gathered by Mr. A. H. Bullen, prince of collectors, from the thick dusts of the Wars of the Roses, "I sing of a Maiden" . . . Ireland, needless to say, is largely represented in this Anthology. I wonder if the lines ascribed to Thomas Davis are genuinely his? . . . Other Irish Marian poets are, D'Arcy McGee, Father Prout, Gerald Griffin, A. de Vere, D. F. MacCarthy, Professor Dowden, Count Plunkett, Father Russell, Rosa Mulholland, Katharine Tynan, E. H. Hickey, Dr. Madden and R. D'Alton Williams. Of course, there are a host of others; and besides, the Irish-Americans figure largely.'

ACADEMY.

'Probably the gem of this book is Crashaw's pathetical descant upon the devout plain-song of "Stabat Mater dolo-

rosa." Like most variations by virtuosos on classical themes, it is no doubt overdone ; and the ingenuity of Crashaw's generation was singularly unchastened. But, with all his extravagance, he is sincere and passionate and moving. . . . Another English hymn of the seventeenth century, by Richard Verstegan, a Catholic printer and publisher, is full of loving *naïveté* : it is not unlike "Jerusalem, my happy home." Of the nineteenth-century poems none deserve popularity better than the "Shrines of Mary" by Adelaide Procter. Father Bridgett's expansions of St. Bernardine's paradox, "All things obey the commands of God, even the Virgin ; and all things obey the commands of the Virgin, even God," is very subtle and strong. The excerpts from Father Caswall's "Drama Angelicum" and "Tale of Tintern" are not without attractions for the sympathetic ; and the "irony" of Mary's Song from the former is both elegant and edifying. Many readers will prefer the verses by Father Prout and an old Provençal poet (translated by John Kenyon) founded on the fancy that the Holy Family had their fortune told by gipsies in the course of the flight into Egypt. Of course, the older poet is the naïver and more serious. A sonnet on Father Passaglia (by W. D. Kelly from across the Atlantic) makes the obvious points both neatly and kindly.'

CATHOLIC FIRESIDE.

'The poem that has been selected from the "Father of English poetry" is the series of stanzas each beginning with a different letter of the alphabet, known as "Chaucer's A. B. C." and said to have been written by him at the request of Blanche, Duchess of Lancaster. Old Geoffrey's verses are given in a modernised form (from the pen of William John Blew) . . . In a later page we meet with Chaucer again, in this case associated with a laureate of our own century, the passage being Chaucer's invocation at the beginning of the "Prioress' Tale," as modernised by William Wordsworth.'

'From the poets of our own time, Mr. Orby Shipley has gathered a rich wealth of verse ; but, it is curious to note that some of the most strikingly beautiful poems are those written by Protestants, or at least non-Catholic pens. It has been well said that the poet is something of a prophet, and true poetic insight reveals to him much of the reality of things ; and so it is that the beauty of Catholic devotion to our Lady has drawn sweet strains from singers who were not themselves aware how well their verse expressed the underlying truths of Catholic devotion. Thus, among the gems of the later period covered by the "Carmina" must be

numbered E. B. Browning's verses "Sleep, sleep, mine Holy One." In Longfellow, we find, in the words put into Prince Henry's mouth in one of the Italian scenes of the "Golden Legend," a wonderfully true picture of Catholic devotion to our Lady.'

ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

'Primarily intended for Roman Catholics, the book will carry weight with them by reason of the legend "Nihil Obstat: Imprimatur": and its dedication "to the revered memory" of Cardinal Manning will not detract from its interest to those who profess the doctrines of the Church of Rome. But, the general reader will find much that is beautiful in Mr. Orby Shipley's Anthology. Thus, we may quote a few lines from a section of the book entitled "Old Catholic Verse" (collected in 1840 by Father Morrall, O.S.B), and reprinted from a MS. volume. "The sun was sinking in the west, Ave, Maria." . . . Some of the best poems printed in this volume are inspired by old Italian paintings of the Madonna and Child, such as those by Murillo (by Trench and De Vere), by Lorenzo de Credi (by Michael Field), or by Raphael. Raphael's Sistine Madonna is the subject of three separate poems by Alfred Gurney, Charles Kent, and G. H. Miles, of New York. The great poets of England of the last three centuries were not, as a rule, Roman Catholics. But, we find nothing more beautiful in Mr. Orby Shipley's volume than Byron's "Ave, Maria," or than Shelley's lines from "Epipsychidion," somewhat doubtfully assigned to the same object of adoration. Nothing will surprise the reader more than that this Anthology should consist so largely of songs addressed to the Virgin Mary by writers who were not Catholics. A very singular poem of Keble's is included in the "Carmina Mariana" which is described as having been withheld from publication with Keble's consent, but against his wish. As a whole, the work has been done with great taste and judgment; and it is a book which may find favour with Protestants as surely as it will with Roman Catholics.'

DUBLIN REVIEW.

'Among the shorter tributes to our Lady are many fugitive pieces—English, Irish and American—which would otherwise have been lost in the pages of old periodicals, sometimes of great beauty, and which it is an especial merit of Mr. Orby Shipley to have preserved. It is particularly

interesting to observe how large a part of the volume is made up of poems by non-Catholic writers, and how beautifully even those express themselves who have no belief in the divinity of Mary's Son: a striking example of the *testimonium animæ naturaliter Christianæ*. The volume is headed with a very graceful and touching dedication to the revered memory of Cardinal Manning, "who encouraged the idea of our Blessed Lady's Anthology, and counselled its development."'

GLASGOW OBSERVER.

'There is no scarcity of anthologies . . . In the forties the genius of Clarence Mangan gave us even a German Anthology, enshrining those matchless renderings of his from the most favoured lyrists of the Fatherland . . . But, not until now has Our Lady had an anthology—at all events in the English tongue. [A Jesuit Father, Antonio de Balinghem, published a Latin Anthology, *Parnassus Marianus*, in 1624.—Editor.] Here, however, it is at last—a stately octavo of more than four hundred pages. The appearance of such a work is a notable event in our Catholic literary history. But, more remarkable than the publication of the work are its contents . . . Two names have to be mentioned that we should expect to come across in such a volume. One is the illustrious Petrarca; the other, the reigning Supreme Pontiff. One inevitably looks for Petrarch's immortal ode: and there it is—a very successful English version indeed, by the late C. B. Cayley. But, what rendering could reproduce the music, the majesty, the sublimity—albeit, the glorious simplicity of the original? Could human language be simpler, or more sublime than that in which is clothed the apostrophe to Mary—*Vergine Santa, d'ogni grazia piena*? His Holiness has also a place in this work. A Latin poem of his faces the first page and serves, in a sense, as a text for the volume. This is how Leo's muse addresses the Blessed Virgin Mary, *Ardet pugna ferox* . . . Suffice it to say that a very good and at the same time faithful English version of the poem is found in the body of the work:

Now that the war is raging, fierce and fell.

Scotland is represented in this book—Protestant Scotland, by Sir Walter Scott and W. Edmonstoune Aytoun (Goethe's Holy Family); and Catholic Scotland by Robert Campbell, of Skerrington (de Santeuil's Hymns from the Paris Breviary), and Father Oswald Hunter Blair, O.S.B., and W. Dunbar, modernised by E. M. Clerke . . . I cannot say the book is absolutely unique—in English Catholic literature it certainly

is. The compiler has merited the gratitude of English-speaking Catholics ; and very few have rendered a more notable service to Mary than this English convert. He has laid at Our Lady's feet a precious gift ; and beyond all doubt her recompense and her reward to him will be exceeding great.'

HISTORISCH-POLITISCHE BLÄTTER : MUNICH.

'There is a double object in the volume—to combine art and piety. All the poems tend to edification ; but, the reviewer would fulfil his office in but a onesided manner if he overlooked the fact that they are not all equally so. Orby Shipley is not to be blamed for having admitted into his collection the hymns in praise of Mary by non-Catholic poets. Far from it. Some of these are of unusual beauty. But, as all art, in the widest sense of the word, so, in a special manner religious art and religious poetry rest on the faith of Christianity and the Church, it is impossible that poets should extol worthily the dignity of Mary, who do not believe in her Son as the Incarnate God. With this unchangeable principle in our minds, we judge of the works of the well-known George Eliot, and others . . . Looked at from another point of view, the collection of verse in praise of Our Lady has earned our deepest gratitude. It embraces all periods of English literature. Even old Catholic Scotland brings its tribute, and an important tribute, viz., two ballads of the poet Dunbar, modernised by E. M. Clerke . . . Amongst the Catholic poets of our own day, perhaps the most conspicuous is Frederick W. Faber. It is well known that the distinguished poet Wordsworth placed the then Protestant Faber in the foremost rank of modern poets as regards a subtle comprehension of Nature.'

KATHOLIK : MAYENCE.

'This English Anthology in honour of the Mother of God ought to be welcome, by reason of its copiousness and its happy selection, to all friends of religious poetry. The compiler of this splendid work has, in truth, presented us with what is not only an edifying book of poetry, but a work of art of the highest class. The greatest poets from the thirteenth century to our own time are represented in its pages by verse . . . distinguished by depth of thought, glow of feeling and true poetic form. The name not only of Catholic Marian poets, but also of prominent Protestants . . . figure in the collection. There is a touching ring about an "Ave"

of the Protestant Keble, which at the pressing solicitation of his friends, but against his own wish, was first published after his death . . . The poetic productions of the Marian literature of England, Ireland, and America form, as is only natural, the principal contents of the Anthology ; translations from the works of poets of the Romance languages, notably the Spanish and Italian, deserve likewise the place of honour assigned to them. But, why the soulful melodies which our German Catholic poets have sung in praise of the Queen of Heaven have been altogether overlooked is incomprehensible to us ; for we cannot assume that the ancient Minnesingers, and the names of our modern Marian poets—Görres, Hahn-Hahn, von Droste, Drewes, Weber, &c.—are unknown to the Editor of the work before us. This work, the most important one ever issued in the department of Marian poetry, is dedicated to the memory of the late Cardinal Manning, who has specially recommended and furthered its publication.'

NOTES AND QUERIES.

'With the theological point of view of this interesting volume, we need hardly say, we are in no way concerned. There are, however, both literary and historical reasons why a collection of this nature should have its uses for our readers. The Blessed Virgin holds a place in the devotional literature, not only of Roman Catholic countries, but also of those Eastern forms of Christianity which are in antagonism to the Papal claims. In England there have always been poets who realised the significance, as regards the art, of her who was called in the Middle Ages "the dear Dove of Paradise" . . . Until we read his pages we had no idea that so much had been written on this subject by our leading poets, more especially by those who can have had no sympathy with the views which have led Mr. Shipley to bring out this beautiful book. One important service of the "Carmina Mariana" is, that it draws attention to Richard Verstegan, and others of our old minor poets, whose verses are worthy of being rescued from the oblivion of our great libraries. Verstegan's poem entitled "Our Blessed Ladie's Lullaby" (1601), though it contains here and there a harsh line, is well worthy of reproduction. The specimens of our modern minor poets might have been added to with advantage.'

AMERICAN CATHOLIC QUARTERLY REVIEW : PHILADELPHIA.

'Frederick Stokes, in his brilliant introduction to Mait-

land's "Dark Ages," states rather strongly a fact whose general truth has been the subject of animadversion by the intelligent and cultivated Catholic body. He says: "It is hardly too much to say that modern literature as a whole is Protestant." . . . Nevertheless, it must be a matter of congratulation that the intellectual power erst given to polemic battles, now exerts itself to great effect in the quieter emulation of religious "belles lettres." . . . While this is true, still must the Catholic heart confess to remissness in one large field of modern literary research—that of Hymnody. . . Whatever the cause may have been, it is true that converts from Protestantism are almost the only eminent expounders, translators and editors of our great hymnologic treasures, of whom the Catholic body can boast. . . . And so it happens that, in this age of collections, we have waited long for a worthy tribute of song to Our Lady; but happily, our long waiting has been answered at last. . . In conclusion, the present reviewer ventures to intrude a personal predilection suggested by his theme. In the midst of so many names of Celtic bards who have sung the praises of Mary, he desiderates that of the tender, devout but ill-starred Mangan; a few stanzas from his fine translation from the German, "Mary, Queen of Mercy," would serve art no less than piety, and would enshrine in many a heart the "dream-encircled" mystic whom cultured Irishmen, by a consensus of opinion, place on the very pinnacle of Ireland's "House of (poetic) Fame."'

CATHOLIC TIMES.

'The first poem in the book is the "Hail, Mary," standing alone upon its page; then come Latin verses by Pope Leo XIII. The whole four hundred pages are a practical commentary on the words, "From henceforth all generations shall call me Blessed" . . . Very interesting are the lines by Heber, R. S. Hawker and Keble . . . There are a few lines composed by Agnes Strickland, on hearing Persiani singing in the Church of St. Mary's, Moorfields, in 1840. They are testimony from a Protestant to the power of music in the service of religion . . . Among the examples of Faber is the poem of the "Expectation," verses flowing with his own fervour. There are some characteristic lines by Lady Georgiana Fullerton, beginning, "Mother of Him who never strove, nor cried." Of course, the Anthology leaves many flowers ungathered; but it was to be a volume, not a shelf of volumes.'

SCOTTISH REVIEW.

'Some years ago Mr. Shipley did excellent service by compiling one of the best anthologies we have for the Ecclesiastical Year. His present work, though of a similar nature, is somewhat different to his "Annus Sanctus" . . . The poems selected are gathered from a wide field, including such writers as Chaucer, Dunbar, Crashawe, Donne, Beattie, Coleridge, Scott, Wordsworth and Tennyson. The collection is Catholic in almost every sense of the word . . . The poems are of all kinds and in all measures, and represent the poetry of many languages, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, as also Syriac and Armenian. As for the English poems, some are gathered from many out of the way corners, and have been written in all parts of the world, wherever, indeed, the English language is spoken.'

AMERICAN ECCLESIASTICAL REVIEW: PHILADELPHIA

'A rich treasury of fairest gems whose beauty appeals not only to the devout lover of the Virgin Mother of Christ, but to the admirer of poetic genius and to the singers of sweet song . . . It contains not only echoes of, and answers to, the affectionate speech of a Mother whom every Christian cherishes in his heart, but the expressions of attraction to which the genius of the stranger, accustomed only to the harmony of nature's voice, confesses in regard to our Blessed Lady . . . We possess nothing like it in our language, either as to choice of material or wide range of subjects, illustrating that central figure of Christian art which, though lovely in every feature of her unblemished humanity, derives her ideal beauty from the divine light of the Infant's face at her bosom.'

NOTE.

Reviews or Notices have also appeared in the following newspapers or other periodicals: 'Bookseller'; 'Catholic Register' (Toronto); 'Catholic World' (New York); 'Church of England Quarterly Review'; 'Colonies and India'; 'Daily Telegraph'; 'Derry Journal'; 'Freeman's Journal' (Dublin); 'Glasgow Herald'; 'Globe'; 'Inquirer'; 'Irish Catholic' (Dublin); 'Irish Ecclesiastical Record' (Dublin); 'Lady's Pictorial'; 'Leeds Mercury'; 'Liverpool Mercury'; 'Newcastle Journal'; 'Queen'; 'Record'; 'Scotsman'; 'Speaker'; 'Truth'; and 'Westminster Gazette.'

Addendum

ANNUS SANCTUS

HYMNS OF THE CHURCH FOR THE ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

Translated from the Sacred Offices by various Authors, with other Hymns, and an Appendix of Earlier Versions

EXTRACTS FROM SOME REVIEWS

GUARDIAN.

'Mr. Orby Shipley has achieved what in these days is a rare feat; he has given us a collection of translations from mediæval hymns which is at once novel and striking. This success results, to some extent, from the limitations to which he has chosen to subject himself. The translations are all by writers who were born, or became Roman Catholics; Mr. Shipley has thus been forced to open out fields which have hitherto been little, or not at all worked. Two collections of translations, one by a Scottish advocate, Mr. Robert Campbell, of Skerrington, the other by Father Aylward, an English Dominican, have been placed at his disposal; and though neither translator was unknown—the best translation, for example, of *Ad regias Agni dapes*, "At the Lamb's high feast we sing," being by Mr. Campbell—their manuscripts have greatly enriched Mr. Shipley's store. A larger variety than exists in the original office books have been obtained, partly by translating hymns from the Ambrosian and Paris Breviaries, as well as from the Roman, and partly by giving several translations of the same hymn. . . . The *Annus Sanctus*, however, is, from a purely literary point of view, something more interesting than a good hymn-book. It is an important contribution to the bibliography of a great English poet ("glorious John" Dryden). . . . We give three stanzas from the version of *Jesu, dulcis memoria*, in the Primer of 1706. If they are not Dryden's, the English Roman Catholic community of that day must have cherished an unknown poet of very remarkable powers.'

SPECTATOR.

'Mr. Orby Shipley's "Annus Sanctus" gives us a welcome addition to the translations of Latin hymns, as well as a valuable addition to the original hymns produced in recent times. Nothing could, in our opinion, better show that the secret of true religious poetry is also the secret of true popularity for hymns, than the world-wide popularity of the most beautiful of the Latin hymns—*Dies Iræ*, *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, *Stabat Mater*, *Pone luctum*, *Jesu dulcis*, and many others. It is the triumphant faith in these hymns which kindles the reader's heart; and so often as they have been adequately translated, so often have they kindled the hearts of all English worshippers—Protestant or Catholic. Mr. Shipley's difficulty has been, of course, with the translations—and not a few of those which he gives us seem decidedly lame. On the other hand, he has given us many translations of much beauty, some by old, some by living, writers, and a certain number of very beautiful original Catholic hymns by living poets. Of King Robert II.'s marvellously beautiful hymn, *Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, for example, he gives us several versions, more or less beautiful. The best, we think, is that of Father Aylward. . . . To our mind, the finest portion of Mr. Shipley's book is the second, in which there is less of translation and more of original composition, and in it we find much that will give the reader great pleasure. . . . The preface is also an interesting and useful one. In it he gives us a summary, or rather, perhaps, a mere hint of his reason for believing that many of the translations of Latin hymns, contained for the first time in the Catholic Primer of 1706, were made by Dryden. English students of the lyrics of the Church will thank Mr. Orby Shipley heartily for this valuable contribution to the literature of the subject.'

TABLET.

'According to Grancolas, it was not till the thirteenth century that the Roman Church admitted hymns, in our sense of the word, to a place in the Breviary. . . . Since (then), however, hymns in the modern and restricted sense have been in nearly daily use in every see in Christendom save one (Vienne?); and "Annus Sanctus" is an ingathering for the most part of Latin hymns culled from the Service Books of Christendom, which at various times have been translated by Catholics into our "dear mother tongue." . . . Probably there is nothing so much wanted as a good Catholic Hymn-Book; and the Marquis of Bute, by his translation of the Breviary, and now Mr. Orby Shipley, by his "Annus Sanctus," have all but made the task an easy one.'

SATURDAY REVIEW.

'As to the paternity of these new claimants to Dryden's authorship . . . it will be obvious to all intelligent readers that the absence of marked Dryden characteristics in some of these hymns is no argument against the others being his. . . . Thus, of the first hymn which Mr. Shipley presents as "probably Dryden's" (*En clara vox*), we can only say that there is no reason why it should not be Dryden's. . . . The same may be said of the version of *A solis* and *Verbum supernum*. There is nothing extraordinary about them; but to anyone familiar with what may be called the poetic journey-work of the time, they have exactly the ring and cadence which suggest Dryden more than anyone else. But, it is different when one comes to such a hymn as the Epiphany hymn, *O sola magnarum*. Here the commonplaces of hymnology are managed with a hand which almost certainly is the hand either of "glorious John" himself, or of some one who was striving hard and successfully to imitate "glorious John." More unmistakable still is the version of *O Sol salutis*. Here, the swell of the verse has for cause Dryden's secret, the cunning disposition of words which even in prose would be pronounced with stress of voice. . . . Even stronger is the *Rex sempiterne cælitum*. Here, everyone who has the slightest faculty of criticism, and the slightest familiarity with Dryden, must recognise the strong style . . . the variety of cadence, the fresh and vivifying phrasing of formulæ, the English scholarship, in short, to use the only term that pre-eminently expresses Dryden's peculiarity. . . . But, why should anyone imitate Dryden thus, when no names were given and no glory to be got?'

WEEKLY REGISTER.

'The new and ampler "Christian Year," on which editor and translators have spent long labours of love, appears in the form of a thick, but convenient, handbook, well printed and covered with paper for future binding. . . . The editor's part has been done with a care that has involved far more research than is usual with collectors of hymns. Mr. Orby Shipley had a considerable quantity of well-known material to deal with, in a manner that should suit those who have long used and loved the popular hymns of our Catholic churches. . . . He set himself, moreover, the task of discovering and reproducing hymns hidden in the libraries of old Catholic families, in books long out of print, and in forgotten MSS. An Appendix gives earlier versions of the Latin hymns of the Church, and all is completely indexed. The work is an important gift to all Catholic speakers of English.'

NATION.

'Under the title of "Annus Sanctus," Mr. Orby Shipley has brought together a most interesting collection of hymns of the Catholic Church and other devotional poems. Most of them are translations, by various hands, from the old Latin versions, and all are so arranged as to follow the offices of the Church throughout the year. In most of those translations somewhat of the strength and stiffness of the ancient tongue is noticeable; but withal, they have a literary as well as a devotional charm, and we consider the editor—who, by the issue of the present volume, has done much to popularise them—deserves the grateful thanks of the Catholic community.'

NOTES AND QUERIES

'We gladly welcome this collection of "Hymns of the Church for the Ecclesiastical Year." The solemn dignity of the religious poems of the Christian fathers can certainly not be surpassed, if equalled, in the present age, and that these should be rendered into English is most desirable. The principle of selecting from many writers has enabled the editor to form a kind of golden treasury, including the best and happiest translations of celebrated hymns. The poems of Faber are too classical to need recommendation here; but some of the compositions now first published, although of a very different order from the deep pathos of his well-known hymns, will be admired for their grace and sweetness.'

ATHENÆUM.

'In his interesting preface to "Annus Sanctus," the editor says that the book is intended in the first place for "spiritual reading," and, secondly, as "a storehouse for the ingathering and preservation of much valuable hymnological labour, which, from the lapse of time, is in actual danger of being forgotten; and, from the decay of books, is in danger of being entirely lost." Mr. Shipley has devoted much time and trouble to the study of early Catholic hymnology, and he has been successful in making some curious discoveries.'

AMERICAN CATHOLIC QUARTERLY.

'The work is a valuable contribution towards the study of English Catholic hymnology. It is a collection, and is intended to be a very complete collection, of the efforts of English Catholics in this direction, so as to furnish the materials whence could be drawn the component parts of a Catholic hymn-book of the future. The compiler has

diligently devoted several years to the compilation of his book, ably assisted by many friends, who have generously placed at his disposal manuscripts and rare books not within reach of the general public.'

IRISH MONTHLY.

'The most interesting in our opinion and most valuable, though not at all the bulkiest, of the recent additions to Catholic literature is the "Annus Sanctus" of Mr. Orby Shipley. There is nothing here more pleasant than to read on the title-page "Vol. I.," for this gives us the right to count upon at least one more volume, for which there are rich and ample materials.'

UNIVERSE.

'This book is a very important step in the direction of much future good work in connection with Catholic hymnology. There are no hymns in the world like those of the Church Office; and Mr. Shipley deserves our sincere thanks for the labour he has undergone in order to present to English readers the treasures of devotion and of sound theology contained in the sacred offices.'

MONTH.

'"Annus Sanctus" should meet with a hearty welcome from all who take an interest in Church hymns. It consists of two parts; the first, contains translations of Breviary and Missal hymns arranged for the different weeks of the ecclesiastical year; the second, mainly consists of original hymns, arranged according to the successive seasons of the Church, on subjects in keeping with their spirit. A special feature of the book is a valuable Appendix, containing a reprint of Breviary Hymns taken from several editions of the once deservedly popular "Primer, or Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary in English." The earliest of the versions printed is that of 1604; these hymns therefore take us back to the days when by far the greater proportion of Englishmen were Catholics in thought and feeling, and they express much of the child-like directness and beautiful simplicity of the true Catholic spirit. It does one good to open the old Primer, and say some of the grand old prayers on the subject of the Passion. They have evidently come from the heart, and they belong to a time when it would have seemed incongruous to Catholics to memorialise Almighty God on our grievances in well-balanced periodic sentences.'

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